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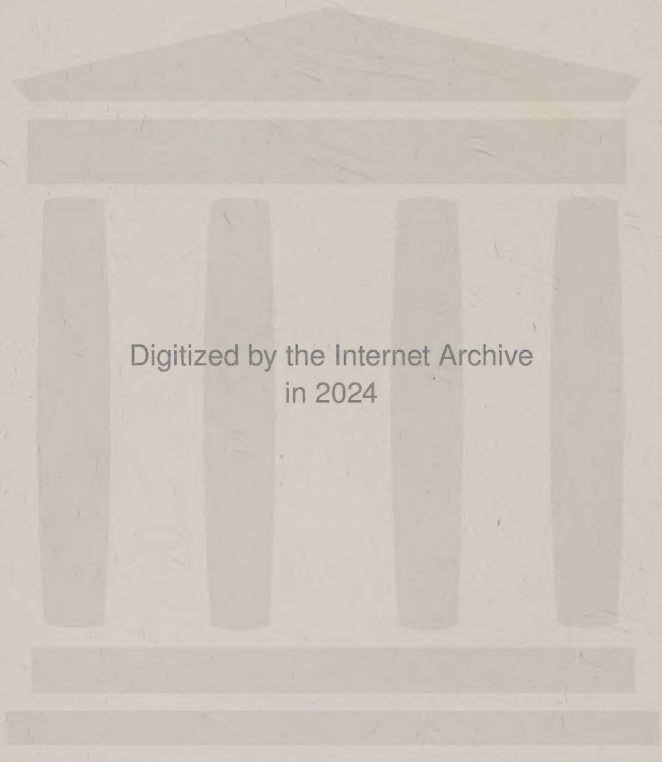
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CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS

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CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS

A RE-STATEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE OF TO-DAY

BY

FRANK BALLARD

D.D., M.A., B.Sc. (LOND.)

AUTHOR OF
'THE MIRACLES OF UNBELIEF,' 'CLARION FALLACIES,'
'WHICH BIBLE TO READ,' 'HAECKEL'S MONISM FALSE,'
'THEOMONISM TRUE,' 'NEW THEOLOGY,' ETC.

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TO THE

CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

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IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE

OF THREE YEARS' HAPPY CHRISTIAN Association

1904—1907

PREFACE

Some fifteen years ago, in Brighton, an unpretentious little volume appeared, entitled *Reasonable Orthodoxy*, containing a series of addresses delivered in Norfolk Road Wesleyan Church. The whole issue was sold out in a few months, and I have been many times since then importuned to republish them. Until now, however, other pressing calls and duties have prevented any serious thought of so doing.

Meanwhile, such important modifications of Christian thought have been in progress as to preclude all idea of mere republication, and compel the re-writing of every section; so that these pages constitute an entirely new work.

Especially does the present wide-spread interest in great themes caused by the publications and activities of the Pastor of the City Temple and his sympathizers, exhibit a definite development of modern religious feeling which cannot be ignored. Whilst no kategorical reply is here attempted, the many suggestions resulting from this movement are continually kept in view throughout the following pages.

It will doubtless be noticed at once that the subjects here considered do not include all those which constitute at the moment leading matters of controversy. Of this the explanation is twofold. Pastoral relations with a Christian church recently left, made it desirable to direct earnest attention first to personal

and practical religion in addresses from the pulpit, with the promise of publication. In this volume, therefore, man's moral free-agency, together with the authority of the Bible and human immortality, are assumed. But in another volume uniform with the present, these and other kindred themes here omitted will ere long be frankly faced.[1]

Through each o the following studies there runs confessedly a practical vein. For this I can offer the critic no apology. However important and welcome may be the discussion of all doctrinal matters in the light of our modern knowledge, there are two notes which must be clearly struck if a truly Christian tone is to result.

(i) The practical consideration of all these fundamental doctrines is in itself of far greater importance than the merely theoretical. No suggestion that emotion should be substituted for thought, is hereby intended. But strive as we may to convince each other of the truth of the views which we individually hold, it is certain that the world of humanity will never become unanimously 'orthodox' or 'heterodox.' The whole 'Church militant here on earth' will never be entirely Roman or Anglican, Evangelical or Unitarian. Not only are there now great cleavages of sincere judgement between these, but it is humanly certain that such will ever be perpetuated.

What, then, one must ask, whether believer or unbeliever, is to become of the Christian religion?

[1] Theism, as the foundation of Christian theology, has already been considered in the two works entitled *Theomonism True* and *The True God*, by the present writer—published by R. Culley.

The unhesitating answer can only be that essential Christianity can never consist in mere dogma, however carefully, earnestly, scientifically, formulated. If there be not a residual *something* which can distinctively claim the Christian name, apart from all shibboleths and logomachies, Christianity is but a religious mirage. And that *something* will never be found in seeking to whittle away doctrine to such an irreducible minimum as shall include all species of religious conviction. For in the process of such reduction, all real convictions would have disappeared long before the non-controversial stage was reached. A residual convictionless faith would be as useless for Christian purposes as a dead body to execute a commission. Even the bare postulates of God, freedom, and immortality would not to-day include all Christians in a common belief. And certainly the stronger insisting upon a divine immanence which only just escapes identity with Pantheism, together with such a mystical conception of human nature as almost makes sin a trifle, and the laboured reduction of the supernatural to a vanishing point, give no promise of welding Christianity into spiritual solidarity.

There is thus only the practical left. Only! As if Christianity, at least according to Christ, was ever valuable for anything else! Unless He be the world's greatest impostor, or the human soul's most utter disappointment, holiness—as the true embodiment of His commands—is of more value to humanity than all theologies, old or new, ever were or ever will be. It cannot, indeed, be said too plainly that theologies are all useless together unless they minister to character.

Unless they do definitely tend to produce the distinctively Christian character which is truly termed 'holy,' they are as profitless as would be the network of pipes beneath the streets of any great city—were they ever so cleaned and polished—without the life-sustaining water flowing through them.

In a word, the mission of Christianity in this world is to make saints, not theologians. The latter are good only so far as they exemplify, train up, and send forth the former. The world's greatest need to-day, in all its international, national, political, civic, social, domestic, as well as religious phases, is—saints who merit the name. Real holiness would end, by prevention, all those wrongs to which nine-tenths of the world's sufferings are due. In so far as the correcting of theological mistakes and the remodelling of theological conceptions tend to bring to pass such a result, repeated attempts in such directions are worth more than all the energy bestowed upon them, and the controversies issuing from them. But if such processes are mere logomachies whose end is in themselves, then they are all alike but sounding brass and clanging cymbal.

Whatever, therefore, becomes of discussions on theology, searchings of heart and scrutinies of character in regard to 'holiness'—nothing less and nothing else—constitute the very soul of the truth and the worth of Christianity. What such holiness actually connotes—in face alike of its contemptuous ignoring by literary writers, and of the gibes found in works like *God and my Neighbour*, as well as the superficial pietisms which have not seldom marred avowedly

Christian representations—will be set forth in the section apportioned to this theme.

(ii) Equally as a matter of principle and as a fact, Christian verities can be best seen and most truly appreciated in the atmosphere which genuine holiness creates. There is no more mysticism in this than in the suggestion of a trained ear as the best appreciator of Beethoven. Nor is there any extravagance whatever in adding that the Christian doctrine which cannot be most clearly seen and expounded in the light of Christian character, is of relatively little importance.

It goes without saying that anything like exhaustiveness or claim to infallibility, in regard to any one of the great subjects summarized, is here out of the question. The very assumption of the possibility of a divine revelation connotes unfathomable mysteries, of which, taking our powers at their best, only the merest fractions can be apprehended intellectually by mortal minds. Write as carefully as we may concerning divine immanence or human personality, no man will ever form a complete or exact idea of what either means, any more than human speech will ever convey a worthy notion of the divine transcendence. The effort to grasp all we may is good, for it stimulates our minds and enlarges our powers of thought. But if it be this world whose redemption is contemplated in the New Testament, then a great deal more and other than breadth or clearness of mental vision is necessary, to make that redemption even thinkable. If human life is to be made universally tolerable, let alone happy and worthy, there will be required a gospel

far too real in heart and life for complete theological expression. The actual need of human nature, with its unmeasured capacity for bliss or woe; the undeniable mystery of moral evil, with its consequences of pain and misery; the fearful contrast exhibited in the lives of countless human beings to the noble and happy and worthy existence that might be—these, much rather than logic or criticism, or even the possibilities of the hereafter, constitute the tests whereby we may measure the reality or otherwise of an alleged gospel. Herein the Master's words are plain enough. 'If any man be willing to do His will, he shall know.'—'Whosoever shall do, and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' The true Ithuriel spear for all theologies, whether they be old or new, is the prayer which is so often on the lips of Christendom, but sometimes, alas! so far removed from its actual ideals and practices, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'

The following studies are confessedly imperfect fragments. But their imperfection is happily irrelevant, seeing that they are only intended as stimulants to further thought, not final pronouncements. Their main purpose is to set forth—in full view of the newest theology, as well as of the latest naturalism—a reasoned summary of what seems to the writer really essential, in outlining such Christianity as deserves the name. The term 'Christian,' like the term 'religion,' may certainly be used with a very varying connotation. But when direct reference is made to theology, it may be suggested, without any harsh judgement or sectarian uncharity, that there are limits beyond which the

claim to the name 'Christian' cannot be sustained, however religiously pleaded, or practically conceded for courtesy's sake.

When, for instance, we are told that 'the time seems to have come for making a frank admission that the old creeds cannot be revised, or brought up to date, but must be laid aside as relics of a time when men believed in the Ptolemaic astronomy, and in witchcraft,'[1] the implication manifestly is that there should be a clean sweep not only of all the old creeds, but also and equally of their foundations. Now this is quite possible and permissible in the name of philosophy, or even of religion. But it is not possible in the name of Christianity. If the time has come to make a wholesale assertion that 'The world does not need to be saved in the sense of the creed of the Church, for it has never been lost,'[2] then it is also time to say that Christianity is exploded, whatever name may be bestowed upon the religious beliefs preached in the pulpits which endorse these sentiments.

Nor is the situation altered by the avowal that 'We believe that the purest soul in history was Jesus Christ, and through Him, therefore, has come the fullest, clearest, revelation of God.'[3] For what are the grounds upon which alone any such belief may be and must be justified? They are that the New Testament gives us not only reliable assurance of the historicity of Jesus, but a substantially valid and accurate account of His character, i.e. His words and

[1] *The New Theology*, Dr. K. C. Anderson, p. 252.
[2] ib., p. 263. [3] ib., p. 266.

works, His life and death, His resurrection and ascension. The conclusion just quoted can never be established solely upon the famous nine passages of Prof. Schmiedel. He himself, indeed, asserts that these are by no means all we may accept as true. Rather they lead to more, and so yield in the end[1] much more. But surely the crucial question is, How much more? Who is to say authoritatively where the reliable ends and the incredible begins? Manifestly the varying views which call themselves 'the new theology' can claim no infallibility for any such decision. What this school chiefly does—if some of its prominent advocates are to be believed—is to jettison the Fourth Gospel altogether as an historical source, along with all such other portions, besides 'the birth stories,' as are obnoxious to its *a priori* inferences from the doctrine of divine immanence. But such a procedure neither gives sufficient warrant for the estimate of Jesus above quoted, nor does it permit of any valid claim to the name of Christian. The conception of religion which cannot be maintained without reducing the New Testament to an incoherent heap of critical fragments, may certainly be both sincere and intellectual. But to term it Christian, is simply to play with meaningless words. On such a basis, philosophers, and indeed theologians in the broad sense, may be reared, but saints—never.

The question whether this principle would, or would not, exclude Unitarians from the Christian pale, is one which cannot be answered; seeing that Unitarianism is so indeterminable in itself, ranging

[1] See his *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 24.

from a bare religiousness which refuses even the most elementary theism, to the nobly spiritual conceptions of a Martineau and the Christological development of a Channing. The following pages pass no judgement hereupon, and cast no aspersions. They simply aim at stating what seem to be equally reasonable and inevitable inferences from the New Testament records, as viewed in the light of a thorough yet sanely restrained criticism. If they do but lead any who read them to think more earnestly and honestly, so that thoughts become convictions, and convictions express themselves in lives more worthy of the Christ of the New Testament, and in characters nearer to the holiness which is the sole panacea for the troubles of civilization, the end of their publication will be answered.

F. B.

Langbar, Harrogate.
November 1907.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This Edition differs from the first only in the retouching of a few sentences with a view to greater perspicuity. In regard to pp. 292, 293, a courteous caveat has been received from estimable Baptist sources, to the effect that the sentence ending with 'only permissible to adults' requires considerable modification. 'If there is one thing on which all Baptists are agreed, it is that the Christian life is dependent on no outward ceremony.'—'Most of us

feel with Mr. Spurgeon that we look upon it as a more hopeful thing to baptize one child—boy or girl—than to baptize a dozen adults.' So writes my correspondent. I gladly here insert his protest—though I am compelled to add that its attitude is contrary to all my experience and observation. I regret that it is not possible here to print the whole of his letter. I rejoice, however, to believe that not only Methodists but also Baptists are, in the best sense, growing broader in their views and practices. If any explanation of such sentiment is required, it will be found in another volume of mine just issued, entitled *Does it Matter what a Man Believes?* (R. Culley).

F. B.

HARROGATE,
October 1908.

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I

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD—THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

SCRIPTURAL, REASONABLE, PRACTICAL

'A God whose relations are as binding for Himself as for His creatures is neither the inscrutable Emptiness of the Agnostic and the Pantheist, nor the inscrutable Power of the Muslim and the Latin, but a living Father to His erring children. This is the real meaning of the decision at Nicæa. The Fatherhood of God is a great and imposing truth; but is it strong enough in its current Unitarian form to bear the increasing burden which a developing society will lay on it? On the contrary, I doubt if we can continue to believe it at all, unless we lay increasing stress on that element of the divine nature which makes such a relation possible. If many signs are not misleading, the battle of the next age will be fought round the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, for the simple reason that it is the only serious theory of religion at present before the world, which fully vindicates the social element in human nature by firmly planting it in the divine.'

H. M. Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, Gifford Lectures for 1904–5, vol. i., p. 242; ii., p. 298.

I

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD—THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

SCRIPTURAL, REASONABLE, PRACTICAL

'Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.'—MATT. xxviii. 19.

'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.'—2 COR. xiii. 13.

IT is not seldom the custom in modern times to contrast religion with theology, laying all the stress of necessity upon the former, whilst reducing the latter to a mere matter of option. Such a procedure is, however, ultimately as misleading as it would be to cast scorn upon the bones of the hand when compared with their fleshy covering. For the tender warmth of the whole body's living tissue would be after all not only inoperative but non-existent, apart from the strong framework to which it is inseparably attached. Even so, a religion which has no definite need of God, no clear thought concerning man, and desires nothing more than an emotional nebulosity in regard to the possible relations between the human and the divine, is as useless for all the highest purposes of Christianity as a boneless hand would be for the needs of advancing

civilization. Whether theology be old or new is a matter of comparatively little moment. The two considerations of ceaseless and overwhelming import for the Christian Church are, that there should be a theology, and that it should be, as far as human thought and sincerity can make it, true.

Of all attempts on the part of Christian thinkers to construct a true theology, beginning necessarily with the conception of God, none have been more exposed to criticism, and often to contempt, than the doctrine of the Trinity. It has been not only the easy butt of the coarser types of unbelief, but the final ground of objection on the part of intellectual pleaders for a 'simpler faith' on rational principles. Timid believers have thought of it as the weakest citadel or most dangerous outpost of orthodoxy, whilst cynics outside the Church have stigmatized it as nothing more than a self-contradictory collection of metaphysical puzzles.

These attitudes are all alike unjustifiable. In no realm of thought or life whatever is it necessary that truth, to be true, should be perfectly simple and easy of apprehension. On the contrary, any one of the commonest realities of our daily experience becomes complex as soon as it is carefully examined, and absolutely inexplicable when it is probed to the utmost.[1] The notion that the thought of God to be valid must involve no difficulty, is simply irrational. No fault is to be found with honest doubt, but superciliousness and sneering are never elements of honesty. All that

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge has just told us, in public print, that when a man flourishes a stick, science cannot tell him why the other end of the stick should move because he grasps and moves this end.

Christian doctrine asks here, as in regard to other themes, is openness of mind and sincerity of heart. In the exercise or neglect of these lies the very essence of our moral probation.

Any attempt to deal with a vast subject in strictly limited space, demands the utmost possible clearness. To this end a few main points must be made vivid by emphasis.

(1) The words of Christ above quoted, with their apostolic echo, cannot by any sincere intelligence be deemed insignificant. No modern criticism is warranted in dismissing these words of Jesus offhand, as unauthentic. Nor can it be truly said that 'the formula as here recorded marks a developed and late stage of doctrinal belief.'[1] For both the genuineness and the date of Paul's letter, which preceded in date, are guaranteed to us by all sober criticism. And these, equally with other words from other portions of the New Testament no less reliable, substantiate Matthew's record. On the one hand, therefore, reverent regard for such a final charge from the Master Himself, cannot but view them as clear, definite, deliberate, emphatic. On the other hand, if we accept them as intentionally embodying the doctrine of a Divine Trinity in unity, it must be not merely on grounds of reverence but, so far as to us is possible, also of reason. If this be the true and final conception of God for Christian faith, there is room for the widest charity no less than for the keenest scrutiny. Only those whose eyes are blinded to the overwhelming vastness of such a conception, can have hearts narrow

[1] See *Internat. Crit. Comm.* (W. C. Allen), Matt. xxviii. 19.

enough to play the bigot towards any who here hesitate or are confounded. The more any distinct interpretation of Christ's words is insisted on, the greater is the need and the duty of cherishing His spirit.[1]

(2) It is always necessary to remember that the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has been for nearly sixteen centuries understood in Christendom, was not a ready-made formula with which the Christian Church started its career, but the result, after three centuries of painful effort, of its determination to be true to facts. Every one can see that there is no theologically formulated doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament. Some later believers, as shortsighted as sincere, have lamented that fact. But wiser appreciation hails it as a reasonable attitude, and a valuable pledge of the natural truthfulness of our Christian records. All the apostles and their first Jewish converts were strong monotheists. Any demand for faith in a definitely formulated Trinity would, therefore, have been as fatal in result as it was impossible in fact. There were three distinct stages of growth in the early Christian thought of God, well and truly expressed in Christ's own express words—'Believe in God—believe also in Me.'

1. 'He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.' This was the first lesson; coming with all the tenderness and force of a new revelation, not only to Philip, but to myriads of hearts that have echoed his
2. pathetic plea. The second lesson—'Believe also in Me'—was begun during His daily communion with the disciples, tragically extended by His sufferings and death, gloriously enlarged by His resurrection and

[1] Mark ix. 38–41, &c.

ascension. The third stage came after Pentecost. 'When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all the truth—He will glorify Me, because He will take of what is Mine and will make it known to you.' This was no mere promise of sudden, magical, transient illumination. It was rather the unlimited assurance of co-operating guidance, wherever there is a sincere mind and an obedient heart. That patient co-operation of the Spirit—often, then as now, grievously frustrated by human perversity—yet led the Church, taken as a Christian whole, into the fuller, deeper, truer, thought of God.

It has been not seldom pointed out in modern literature that in proportion as a man is really great, some few years must elapse before we can get a true perspective of his character. How much more was it so, necessarily, in the case of the Christ of the Gospels! It was no mere mythical adoration, but the steadied, ever-clearing gaze of reverent sincerity, which gave the early Church, with every passing decade, a surer conviction of the actual deity of Jesus. The attempts to express this in the successive Councils which declared Him to be 'truly God,' 'perfectly man,' 'undividedly one,' 'unconfusedly two,' were, when modern cynicism has carped its worst, the expression of the Church's very best and deepest convictions concerning facts for the truth of which believers were then ready, if need be, to die. The same patient co-operation of the same Spirit may lead us now to get still wider and clearer conceptions than theirs.

But it ill becomes the critic of to-day, coldly reviewing those early Christian struggles, to sneer at

the violence of their 'metaphysical subtleties.' For as regards keenness and strength of intellect, the men of that day were quite equal to any of this. Whilst an intensity of sincere conviction such as theirs, ready at any time to accept persecution and death as its price, is almost unimaginable amidst the easy superficialities and superfluities of the present age. Assuredly the form of doctrine which has generally prevailed throughout Christendom since the Council of Chalcedon, was not then the sophistical perpetuation of an unintelligible formula originally concocted by religio-philosophical fanatics. It was rather the Church's final conclusion, after generations of pathetically earnest struggle for the truth, concerning the overwhelming realities which confronted every genuine believer. The unalterable oneness of God, the unimpeachable sinlessness and manifest divinity of Jesus Christ, the proved need and actual guidance of the promised Spirit—these all so forced themselves upon the Christian consciousness, as to compel them to do their best to formulate a theory which should do reverent justice to the whole. The majority of believers, whose consensus gave Christendom this theory, were confessedly human and imperfect. There were also many minorities of varying worth. If, however, modern thinkers claim the right to re-examine this ancient formula in the piercing light of modern knowledge, it should at least be with the respectfulness due to venerable conviction, rather than with a Vandalism often deficient in mind no less than heart. Assuming such a spirit, we may proceed to a present-day restatement.

(3) The genuine Christian position frankly acknowledges all that is true in modern Agnosticism, when it questions the ultimate knowableness of God, in any exact or exhaustive sense.

But such acknowledgement is very far from being due to recent Agnosticism. For the whole Bible is perfectly plain in this regard. Even those who hold antique theories of verbal inspiration are equally earnest with later critics, in insisting that the anthropomorphisms of the Bible ought never to occasion difficulty for any sincere mind. Its most human representations are but accommodations to human thought and speech. They are all manifestly correlated with and corrected by the great unmistakable utterances which give us the final truth. 'Behold, God is great and we know Him not; the number of His years is unsearchable. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out.' 'No man hath beheld God at any time.' Such words, from the Bible's earliest and latest portions, cover its whole scope, and lead us to an Agnosticism which is as much more reasonable as it is more reverent, than that recent usage of the term which suggests that if everything cannot be known exhaustively concerning God, the whole thought of Him may be dismissed in despair if not also with indifference.

It may, however, be freely acknowledged that modern Christendom has even yet great need to realize more carefully the awfulness of the divine majesty. There is by no means too much reverence in Christian modes of speech and worship. Science has taught religion much herein, but there is yet a great deal more

to learn. The late Aubrey Moore, a competent as well as truly Christian scientist, well said that 'The one absolutely impossible conception of God in the present day, is that which represents Him as an occasional visitor. Either God is everywhere present in nature, or He is nowhere. He cannot be here and not there. In nature everything must be His work, or nothing.' [1] The days are past when the intelligent believer trembled at any mention of evolution. But its full scope has yet to be appreciated. The equal acknowledgement of divine immanence and divine transcendence must ever be mostly a matter of faith. We may profess to believe these with all sincerity, but actually to grasp the significance of such a conception as they involve is for ever beyond us.

Even if we considered only our own planet, its 197,000,000 square miles of surface and 260,000,000,000 cubic miles of contents might suffice to teach us both reverence and charity, if indeed God is everywhere. This, however, is but a trifle for a true theology. Even the astronomy of the ancients went farther than this. 'Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by name; by the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, not one is lacking.' [2] Such words are easy enough of translation into modern terms. Whether we think of Mercury in its wild rush through the solar heat, or Venus gleaming in the western sky, or ruddy Mars with its tantalizing problems, or of mighty Jupiter

[1] *Lux Mundi*, p. 99. [2] Isa. xl. 26.

1,230 times the size of our own planet, or of Saturn with its wondrous rings, or of Uranus and Neptune revolving in their tremendous orbits—the latter nearly three thousand millions of miles away from the centre of our system—in regard to each and all of these, if God be here, He must be also there. If we roll all these, however, into one, the sun that makes our every ordinary day is some six hundred times the size of the stupendous total. Surely He who, measureless ages since, bade the matter which according to modern science filled the whole sphere enclosed within more than Neptune's orbit, condense and fling off these worlds on worlds, is sufficiently awe-inspiring to convince puny man of the hopelessness of any attempt to comprehend His nature, much less express it in human formulae.

But the true awfulness is yet untouched. What of the millions on millions of suns that blaze in immeasurable space beyond our comparatively little solar sphere? Sirius alone, at the foot of the constellation of Orion, is 125 times larger than our sun. When the country swain, or the city clerk on holiday, gazes up at the little group of the Pleiades, he may or may not call to mind the ancient query 'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?' But how many people, even possessed of intelligence and piety, appreciate what here the divine immanence involves? If God be near enough to make our hymns sensible, and save our prayers from meaningless mockery, then there also—1,500 millions of millions of our little miles away, where ordinary eyes dimly descry half a dozen points of light but the telescope reveals more than a

thousand orbs, some seventy of them vaster than our sun—He is God. What, indeed, is the whole of this our tiny planet compared with Alcyone—1,000 times larger than our central sun! Yet if God be God at all, He is there no less than here.

Yet all this is as nothing in face of the rest. Science bids us think of light travelling at some 187,000 miles in a single second, and yet at that terrific speed, without any pause, requiring three years and a half to reach the nearest star. But the whole and the appalling truth is, that if a ray of light had started at its native speed from some of the innumerable orbs that lie out upon the confines of space, at the time when our earth's geologic ages began, it would not yet have reached us! So say unerring mathematics. Yet He whom we call God, 'cannot be here and not be also there!'

What then shall be said when we turn from the infinitely great to consider also the infinitely small? Modern physiology tells us that the life-blood coursing through our veins consists of distinct organisms so tiny that 120,000,000,000 of them can be packed into a single cubic inch![1] And this is but typical of the rest of our bodies. A cubic inch of liver contains, we learn, some 156,000,000,000 cells; whilst each cell in turn includes 64,000,000,000 living units. But the ultimate atoms would be still more in number. On careful calculation there would be in a single cell some 300,000,000,000,000. And if we desire to think of the whole liver, in which there are about ninety cubic inches, we should require

[1] Prof. Huxley's estimate—*Lessons in Elementary Physiology*, p. 96.

this interesting computation: 156,000,000,000 × 90 × 300,000,000 millions.[1]

But this is yet not all. If we would know the whole truth, the last word of science tells us that the 'ultimate atom' is no longer ultimate, but is composed of electrons so small in comparison, that one of them would be represented by a printer's full stop when the atom is represented as large as an average Town Hall. How many electrons, then, go to make up the total of a single human liver, we may forbear to calculate. Yet there are and have been many such livers in existence. And no single electron without God! But even then the overwhelming total awaits the touch of something which no microscope, no figures, no formulae, can reveal. Science, here as helpless as common sense to analyse or synthesize, calls it life. But Christians are obliged to recognize the 'finger of God.' For 'in nature everything must be His work or nothing.'

Surely here the man of faith and the Agnostic must kneel together in lowliest reverence. Is not Sir Oliver Lodge well warranted in his conclusion that 'the simplicity and beauty of the truth concerning even the material universe, when we know it, will be such as to elicit feelings of reverent awe and adoration'?[2]

[1] *New Conceptions in Science*, Carl Snyder, p. 246. The author naïvely remarks: 'With 300,000,000 million atoms of varying size and quality grouped together in almost infinite variety into 64,000 million molecules, one might do a good deal of explaining.' The intention is to get rid of 'the GOD hypothesis.' Common sense, no less than philosophy, would surely rather say concerning such facts that we find here 'a good deal' to be explained.

[2] Romanes Lecture, 1903, *Modern Views on Matter*, p. 27.

It were certainly far better, in face of such actualities, to reel with reason overwhelmed into an intellectual despair which yet left an environment full of present duty, than in the name of belief to soar aloft into metaphysical or theological conceits which neglected humble duty to cultivate rank bigotry. The very first and last word of real faith must ever be, 'No man hath beheld God at any time.' But between the first and last words there is room for a life-long chapter of charity, even as suggested by the apostle: 'If we love one another, God abideth in us and His love is perfected in us.'

(4) Proceeding, then, in this spirit of mingled humility and awe, to investigate the Christian conception of the Trinity, three negatives must be frankly faced before the positive scripturalness, reasonableness, practicalness of such a doctrine can be emphasized.

(i) The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not a rigid definition of God which is to be forced, Shibboleth-like, upon men by an ecclesiastical sword, and under pain of ruthless condemnation.

One of the most ghastly pages in the whole lurid record of religious bigotry is that which tells of the burning of Servetus by Calvin, because he was 'heterodox' as regards this doctrine. 'For this he was roasted to death over a slow fire.' It seems utterly incredible—who would not disbelieve it if he could? The recollection of the additional horrors of the Inquisition brings small relief, in very deed. Yet even in our own time there are those who would perpetuate a much more awful suggestion. A creed the public recitation of which is still compulsory in

the Established Church of this country, actually says: 'The Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity—which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, *without doubt he shall perish everlastingly*!' And those who—alas! not only in the Anglican Church—promulgate this dreadful notion, in absolute defiance of Christ and His apostles, profess to be troubled or even indignant that men do not come to God and love Him, when the words they themselves insist on employing would make Him out to be an utterly unreasonable monster!

For such monstrosity happily there is no shadow of support in Scripture. Rather the whole spirit and teaching of Jesus emphatically condemn it. For which reason, if modern critics, after the type of Dr. Draper,[1] lay stress on the occurrence of the wrong, they ought in all honesty to acknowledge also the existence and promulgation of the right. The truly Christian attitude can never be better expressed than it was by John Wesley in the eighteenth century[2]: 'I dare not insist upon any one's using the word Trinity or Person. I use them myself without any scruple, because I know of none better; but if any man has any scruple concerning them, who shall constrain him to use them? I cannot. Much less would I burn a man alive, and that with moist green wood, for saying, "Though I believe the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet I scruple using the words Trinity and Person because I do not find those terms in the Bible." These

[1] *Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 216.

[2] See his sermon on *The Trinity*.

are the words which merciful John Calvin cites as written by Servetus in a letter to himself.' And when, elsewhere, Wesley also said: 'I am sick of opinions, give me good and substantial religion; a humble, gentle, love of God and man,' he proved himself to be in the only true and worthy apostolical succession, for the whole New Testament points unmistakably in the same direction.

(ii) For which reason it must also be distinctly understood that the holding of the specific doctrine of the Trinity is not an absolute essential to personal salvation.

The bitter spirit evinced by some evangelical Christians towards Unitarians, with the half-uttered wonder as to whether they can be saved, is altogether unworthy of those who profess to follow Christ. No man ever was or will be 'saved,' here or hereafter, by any opinions whatever. The saved man is the man who believes in and loves Christ enough to obey Him. How widely this is to be interpreted, the disciple who knew his Master best says most plainly—'Every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God.' The Church may have good warrant for teaching that to a perfect faith, as to a full-orbed Christian character, a belief in the Trinity in Unity is not merely helpful but essential. But that is measurelessly different from the wild assertion that all who do not unhesitatingly accept a theological theory are in danger of eternal perdition.

(iii) Furthermore, the definite belief in the doctrine of the Trinity is not a *sine quâ non* of Christianity.

We may truly assert that this was the martyrs' faith, and that it has been held by the majority of believers from the very first. We may, moreover, affirm that

ideal Christianity demands an earnest and intelligent acceptance of the Trinity in Unity. But that such belief is neither the centre nor the circumference of apostolic Christianity, is put beyond all possibility of doubt by unmistakable words. 'In Christ Jesus,' wrote the apostle—under specially emphatic circumstances—'neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love—a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' 'If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.' It is indeed high time to make vivid as well as clear, the truth that Christianity and 'orthodoxy' are not synonyms. There may well be and ought to be a body of doctrine which most fully expresses the revelation of God in Christ, as exhibited in the New Testament. But who are they that have the monopoly of this, and hold it without spot or blemish?

The real state of the case, equally from the standpoint of divine love and human need, is rather shown by analogy with the bodily life we all share. As the human body is an organism in which certain organs are vital and yet may be diseased to considerable extent without involving the collapse of the whole, so is Christianity a body of truth in which there may be measurable departure from ideal without forfeiting the Christian character of the total life and work involved. That there are limits to such abnormalities, is to be, of course, understood. But very few men, if any, are perfectly healthy in body. Yet millions

of lives, imperfect and even physiologically tainted to no small degree, are manifestly both real and vigorous. Some of the world's best work, we know well, has been done by invalids. Robert Hall, Charles Darwin, R. L. Stevenson, and many others, would rise from their graves to rebuke any pedant of science who should declare that only a physiologically or hygienically perfect man could make life worth living. It is the same lesson which is really enforced by the great apostle when he says, 'Desire earnestly the greater gifts—and a still more excellent way show I unto you.' Love and light together give us truly the ideal. But when the real is not the ideal, it is better to have love in the dark than to have light with the nipping frost of lovelessness. The truest doctrine should certainly lead to the noblest life. For that reason, truth to the uttermost should be the aim of every believer. Yet Christ Himself has made plain for ever that fruit, not form, is the test of true discipleship. 'Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord—but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.' In the parable of the two sons, one of whom obeyed in word and the other in deed, He left no doubt as to which of the two did the will of the father.

(5) What, then, it may be asked, is the real significance of the doctrine of the Trinity, and what are the reasons for holding it?

It is the attempt on the part of humble and sincere belief to express, in human thought and speech, the sum total of the revelation of the Godhead as found in the Bible, and more especially in the New Testament. How sincerely and with what pains it was formulated,

is witnessed by the very bitterness of those early conflicts of which critical unbelief sees only the outer and repulsive shell. But more than an attempt it can never be—and, at best, an attempt doomed to fail. It has been well said by a modern writer that 'No theologian or theist has ever maintained that God, though He revealed Himself twenty times over in twenty different Bibles, could ever be known by man as what God actually is.'[1] The ancient story of St. Augustine is peculiarly modern in its application. When to the child trying to pour the sea into a shrimp-pool he said, 'That, my little man, you will never be able to do,' the dream-child replied, 'I shall do it sooner than thou, Augustine, wilt be able to understand the immeasurable mystery of God.'

Since, however, it is due to our fellow men to try at least to tell them what the Church means when this doctrine is upheld, Dr. Joseph Cook's succinct statement[2] will serve as well as any.

'The Father, Son, and Holy Spiri , are one and only one God.

'Each has a peculiarity incommunicable to the others.

'Neither is God without the others.

'Each with the others is God.'

To show the metaphysical failure of this attempt to express the inexpressible, would be as easy as to riddle the Athanasian creed with criticisms. Yet it may serve as a pointer in the right direction, with this special advantage, that the word which is most

[1] Mallock, *Reconstruction of Belief*, p. 256.

[2] Boston Monday Lectures, *The Trinity a Practical Truth.*

ambiguous and misleading in ordinary religious phraseology is altogether absent. To say that the doctrine of the Trinity means 'Three Persons in one God,' must, to the modern mind, always be more hindering than helpful, so far as any real apprehension is concerned. It not only fails to give a true representation of the words, both in Latin and Greek, which were so carefully employed by the early Churches, but the present and unalterable significance of the term 'person' in ordinary speech, puts the greatest possible barrier in the way of so conveying any true meaning to the non-theological mind. In fact, if we use the language of to-day, the formula, 'Three persons in one God,' is exactly what the Christian doctrine of the Trinity does *not* mean.

It may well be that no word in any language can convey such a relationship as is suggested in the brief statement just given. But that need not trouble us. The real question is, rather, why should we thus think of God at all? To which the first reply must be that in no other way can we do justice to the New Testament. We can interpret the Old Testament without any real difficulty on lines of a pure monotheism. A few strange references might puzzle us, but would certainly not compel any intelligent reader to assert the triunity of God. But with the New Testament it is wholly different. The day of proof-texts is, indeed, gone by. But something much more serious has here to be reckoned with, viz. a fair and full induction from the whole teaching o Christ and the apostles, whereby alone we can obtain a true grasp of the total essence of the New Covenant. When this is frankly faced, it

is not too much to say that the dilemma becomes both real and clear. Either some doctrine of Triunity concerning God must be accepted, or the authoritative integrity of the New Testament must be dismissed. The only thing, for instance, that can be done with the words quoted above from Matthew's Gospel, if the doctrine of the Trinity be deemed finally incredible, is to say that 'some authorities regard these words as doubtful,' and so under a critical cloud put them altogether and for ever out of sight.

The same applies not only to other isolated passages, but to the writings of John in general, and his Gospel in particular, upon which so much depends in this connexion. All allowance being made for individual thinkers,[1] it may be truly said that the doctrine of the Trinity is rather a critical than a theological question. Our estimate of the Christian Scriptures must determine our conception of the Divine nature. No objection to a reasonable and thorough criticism is hereby suggested. But so long as we are not confined to the subjective vagaries of extremists, so long, that is, as we may regard the Gospels and Epistles as giving us substantially a reliable account of Christ and His doctrine, so long the dilemma remains, either He

[1] Such as is exemplified in the attitude of Dr. J. Drummond, the erudite Principal of Manchester (Unitarian) College, Oxford, whose recent volume on *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* is, alike in tone and scholarship, a veritable ideal of critical discussion, a noble contribution to the literature of a great subject. He concludes, against his two revered teachers in theology, that 'on weighing the arguments for and against to the best of my power, I must give my own judgement in favour of the Johannine authorship.' How this decision is compatible with the Unitarian attitude must, of course, be a matter of individual conviction.

blasphemes and misleads, or we must think of Deity as Triune.

Three and only three absolute or kategorical statements concerning the divine nature appear in that full and final revelation which the New Testament represents.

(i) 'God is love.' This is not only sublimely comprehensive, but finds its clear and emphatic expression in utterances most familiar to Christian ears. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' 'The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' No attempt is made to solve the mystery of the anthropomorphic analogy. We know enough of fatherhood to lift us thence up to a real faith in God the Almighty Father.

(ii) 'God is light.' A sublime figure indeed; but surely pointing to the only Man who has ever dared to say, 'I am the Light of the world.' For not only did He Himself intimate that His disciples were in turn to be the light of the world through their abiding in Him, but when the whole setting of His life and character is taken into account, no choice is left us but to regard this with His other transcendental claims as either involving Deity or blasphemy. 'I and My Father are one,' can never, in its context, honestly be explained away as meaning mere spiritual affinity, or less than a divinely, not humanly, filial relation. 'Before Abraham was, I am,' must either on critical grounds be wholly cancelled, or constitute a claim which, especially to Jewish ears, was absolutely and for ever irreconcilable with a merely human consciousness. Still less thinkable is such an utterance from the lips of a good man.

Furthermore, the objective validity of His claim to be in such incomparable sense 'the light,' is borne witness to no less by the noblest unbelievers than by the vast army of believers. But if, as they all join to testify, He were so good, He must assuredly be true in His assertions concerning Himself. If, indeed, His own claims are to be regarded, then, 'all men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father—he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent Him.'

(iii) 'God is Spirit.' It was a miracle of grace, as well as the crowning of womanhood with honour, that such words should be spoken, in utter defiance of the maxims of the time, to a woman of none the best character, by the wayside. But this great assertion is in direct, inseparable, organic connexion with all Christ's other assertions and promises. The reality of the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, as distinct from the Father and the Son in Deity, may be cut out of the New Testament records by the critical scalpel and cast away, but it cannot be misunderstood in those records as we possess them. The fact that πνεῦμα in Greek is neuter, is nothing but an accident of language. It says no more against personality, than *le livre* in a modern tongue says for that of a book. So long as any weight or worth remains to the words of the Christian Scriptures, it is sufficient to point out that every attribute which in our human thought goes to constitute personality, is plainly ascribed by Christ Himself, and by the apostolic writers, to One who is called 'the Paraclete,' 'the Advocate,' 'the Comforter.'

These three great key-words confessedly suggest rather than define. But whilst definition is as unnecessary as in the nature of the case impossible, the suggestion, in Gospels and Epistles alike, is so unmistakable, so emphatic, so constant, as to be wellnigh overwhelming. From the total induction, therefore, it is not too much to affirm that with the doctrine of the Trinity, the New Testament writings, as we have them, stand or fall.

(6) The mystery or incomprehensibility of such a doctrine constitutes no sufficient ground of objection to its acceptance.

Assuming the scripturalness of the Triune conception of the Godhead, it is certainly not to be rejected because the human mind cannot comprehend it. For it is manifest beyond controversy that to creatures of such limited faculties as ourselves, comprehension can never be the gauge of truth. As a plain matter of fact, the most intelligent man can no more comprehend himself than he can the divine Triunity. Indeed, he does himself embody an analogous triunity. For he must acknowledge in himself the blending of the body, the mind, and all that we connote by 'heart.' But where the physical ends and the intellectual begins, where the intellectual ends and the emotional-moral begins, or how physical, intellectual, and moral, combine to make him one personality, he knows not, nor can the latest psychology by any means tell him. All our surest and simplest realities are alike unanalysable and indefinable. What even life and consciousness are, we cannot say. They defy definition. But if a man cannot comprehend a fly or analyse himself, it

would be irrational to the uttermost to make belief in the triune nature of God depend upon human comprehension. Augustine's dream points to an everlasting lesson. A God who involves no mystery would be but a man-made fetish.

(7) But what if the mysterious should also mean the self-contradictory ?

Such an impasse would indeed be fatal to any doctrine. But it has no application here. When the misleading connotation of the term ' person ' as above remarked is avoided, there is no more contradiction in terms in speaking of ' Three persons in one God,' than in referring to three distinct phases of being in one man. To attempt here a philosophically full justification of Divine triunity is manifestly impossible. Nor is it essential. The following summary may well suffice. ' The doctrine of the Trinity therefore is no mere metaphysical puzzle, but an earnest attempt to state, under the conditions of and limitations of human thought and speech, the mystery of the nature of God. It is essentially the philosophical statement of the Fatherhood of God. If that Fatherhood is not a mere anthropomorphism, with which there is nothing in God to correspond, then it implies a Trinity and not a unit. It is a theory dealing with a matter that must for ever transcend any full comprehension on man's part, but it is a theory based upon fact and in harmony with reason. More than that cannot be urged for the most perfect theory.' [1]

[1] *The Faith of a Christian*, by a Disciple, cheap edition, p. 96 (Macmillan). The whole of the preceding chapter in this valuable book merits careful reading.

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(8) It still remains, however, to ask for the practical import of this distinctively Christian conception of the divine nature.

The infinite Fatherhood, the transcendent Sonship, equally divine and human, the Spirit's personal and gracious omnipresence, can never to true faith be merely mental mysteries. Little, indeed, is the total sum of our knowledge relative to God Himself; less than the drop as compared with the ocean. But it is very, very much to us in value, even the spring of our whole higher life and hope.

Every life, to be Christianly worthy, requires the sublimity of the divine Fatherhood. Without such blending of a tenderness of which we know something with the majesty of which we really know nothing, God could be no God such as mortals need. But with Christ's doctrine held as true, God becomes evermore the worthy object of a worship whose essence is reverent love.

Yet without also the divine-human sonship, the divine sublimity would but soar above us, too sublime to be apprehended. 'No one has God, who instead of remaining true to the teaching of Christ, presses on in advance,'[1] says the apostle. Is it too strong an utterance? No. For without the incarnate Son what real conception can we form of the character of the Infinite Majesty? He, and only He, who has dared to say, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,' is the everlasting pledge to a world of mortals that the immortal God is no mere necessity of logic or creation of theology, but the transcendent personal Reality whose love is the

[1] 2 John 9. Weymouth's Translation.

heart of the universe. Without the revealing Christ, the God of the kosmos is little more than an intellectual nebulosity. The substantiality of Christian faith is ever found in Him 'who being the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the exact representation of His being,'[1] truly reveals the true God to humanity.

But it is He who points us to the 'Spirit of truth,' as the fuller and abiding revelation of Himself. Words may well fail us to express what has been dimly, though reverently, conceived as His 'procession' from the Father and the Son. But we do not need precise expression. What we do need is to have the divine sublimity made homely enough for guidance, comfort, and stimulus, in daily life. The very realness of the Godhead, of which Christ is pledge, might keep us at an awful distance quite unrelieved by divine immanence. We need the ever-accessible divine answering in all actuality to the aspiration:

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Even divine majesty and love combined cannot save us, if they have but blazed forth for a while and then departed again, only to leave us in the eternal dark. Our poor human hearts need not a heavenly comet but a constant sun, to give them light and warmth and hope. But all this, and more, is in the word 'He shall abide with you for ever.' 'The love of the Spirit' is the very essence of daily Christian reality.

No truth, therefore, can be more practical than

[1] Heb. i. 4. R.V. and Weymouth.

this doctrine of the divine Triunity. The Fatherhood of the Infinite Majesty, proved to men in the living, loving Son of man; the sublime proof made matter of daily consciousness, daily comfort, daily guidance—light for the perplexed, inspiration for the commonplace, constant influences for good for every man—how can any doctrine on earth be so utterly and comprehensively practical as that which continually prays 'the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all'?

(9) Finally, it is to be noted that such careful, reverent, earnest thought concerning God as the doctrine of the Trinity connotes, whilst in itself utterly inadequate, is yet relatively sufficient for its main purpose. 'The object of all instruction,' wrote the Apostle Paul, 'is to call forth that love which comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a sincere faith.'[1] Even if the view above outlined be taken as entirely true, it is certain that the right use of such knowledge can never be to construct ecclesiastical anathemas, or instigate religious persecution in Christ's name. From His standpoint, all such avowals of faith are for ever wrong to the uttermost. Those who know most of true theology are also most fully aware that to such as ourselves God can never be perfectly revealed. It were far more reasonable to imagine all human physiology and psychology made plain to a new-born babe. 'We know in part'—no more. Hereafter we may know more, though it must require eternity for the revelation of the Infinite.

[1] 1 Tim. i. 5, Twentieth Century New Testament.

Here, amidst our mortal limitations, all creeds and definitions, whether better or worse, are but accommodations to our ignorance. Hence all, always, is with a view to spiritual life. Its ultimate value is practical, not theoretical. We are to 'walk' by faith, which is neither to jump, nor to stamp. The intention of a gospel involving 'the glory of God,' could never be that a petty section of humanity should take to themselves an assumption of infallibility, and forthwith assert or assume that all others in His vast family were ignored or cast out by the Divine Father.

The only real 'glory of God' amongst men is the likeness to Himself which they evince. All doctrines that do not produce this result are but a delusion and a snare. No mere holding of correct beliefs ever yet made any man a Christian indeed. No insisting upon exactly accurate theology, whether old or new, will ever save the world. Doctrine is always and only valuable as a means to an end. If the end be lacking, the doctrine is but salt without the savour—'good for nothing.' All belief in Christ that does not make a man Christlike is either false or faulty. So too, all insistings upon the doctrine of the Trinity which do not proceed from and lead to the reproduction in man of the love and goodness of the Triune God, are but denials of His nature and really take His name in vain. But such self-contradiction is never necessary. On the contrary it should be and may be for ever true, that he whose whole being is baptized 'into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,' will live in such daily communion with the

divine as to make his life and character and conduct a ceaseless benediction. In one word, the genuine believer in the Triune God may, and should, himself become a veritable incarnation of 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,' everywhere and always.

II

SIN—ITS REALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

'It follows, then, that responsibility for the *possibility* of moral evil and for the opportunities of its realization rests with God: that responsibility for the *actuality* of moral evil lies with man.'

'The seat of sin is the will alone. "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will." This foundation-stone of the ethics of Kant, is unquestionably that also of the Christian philosopher. Apart from the conscious volition of a person, there is no such thing as moral goodness or badness. The term "sin" and its derivatives, can only be applied to the issues of will.'

Dr. F. R. Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Hulsean Lectures, 1901–2, pp. 122, 163.

II

SIN—ITS REALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

'And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin.'—JOHN xvi. 8.

'Sin is the violation of law.'—1 JOHN iii. 4.

As it is beyond controversy that man is a religious animal, and is the only creature on earth capable of religion, so is it equally true that the sense of sin dates back to the very dawn of manhood. The conviction, elementary maybe, yet none the less real and strong, that certain kinds of behaviour ought not to be, and so far need not be that the doer of them was to be treated as guilty, came to mankind in the very birth. It was the distinctive mark of emergence from the preceding animal stage. Words that manifestly embody it were amongst the first coinings of the faculty of speech. From prehistoric periods it accumulated and developed in tradition or folk-lore, down to its ever-intensifying acknowledgement in the written records of history and religion. History, indeed, is nothing more than a record of the doing of right and wrong, i.e. of sin and sinners, with their emphasizing opposites.

The Bible, which we may here take as the best-known book of religion, although in this respect

generally typical of all other sacred writings, is so unequivocal and vivid in its references hereto, that it might well be termed the sinner's manual. Whatever else may be found in it, and whatever questions may arise concerning its structure and worth, this at least is for ever plain, that it lays more stress upon the reality and significance of sin than any other collection of writings in literature.

Viewed simply in its practical aspect as wrongdoing, sin is to-day more fully acknowledged than ever by every nation of civilization. The whole complex system of human laws, with their innumerable by-laws, which rule modern life, have been devised with the sole purpose of preventing wrongdoing. The incalculable wealth expended on armies and navies with a view to war, together with the wellnigh equal sums found necessary for the maintenance of magistrates and police in time of peace, constitute an overwhelming witness to the actuality and potency of sin as a principle of human nature. Were it not for the sinfulness of humanity, all the millions expended in deadly engines of destruction, and in maintaining hosts of men to do nothing but train each other to use them, might be employed for increased comfort of body and ennoblement of mind, in the case of myriads of human beings whose life at present is scarcely worth living. Nor have these facts been by any means hidden from philosophers and philanthropists. Men of thought have acknowledged quite as openly as men of action, the actuality and potency of wrongdoing. They have discussed it, indeed, *ad nauseam*. How little they have effected towards either its cure

or its prevention, is seen in the situation at present prevailing throughout the world. Confining ourselves here, necessarily, to circumstances nearest us, it is impossible to avoid noticing how various and conflicting are the estimates of the problem of moral evil.

A modern writer who has largely caught the ear of the people, prints these definitions. 'Sin is disobedience of the laws of God. Crime is disobedience of the laws of men. Vice is disobedience of the laws of nature'; and then adds, with noteworthy modesty, 'I say that there is no such thing as a known law of God; that the so-called laws of God were made by men in God's name, and that therefore the word sin need trouble us no more. There is no such thing as sin.'[1] Here, then, we see sin dismissed as a non-entity by the process of ignoring God. Elsewhere the same result is reached by contemning man. For manifestly if, as is alleged, 'No man is answerable for *his own* acts,'[2] there is not only an end to the possibility of vice and crime, but also to the actuality of manhood.[3]

If the exclusive definition of sin as referring only to the violation of divine law—religiously understood—be accepted, then we are our own witnesses that large sections of society are quite content to treat it as an utter trifle, whilst others regard it as little more than

[1] *Not Guilty*, by R. Blatchford, p. 38. [2] ib., p. 10.

[3] For a full and kategorical exposure of the follies and fallacies of the work just mentioned, see *Guilty, a Tribute to the Bottom Man*, by the present writer (R. Culley, price sixpence). Although, to be exact, the patent self-contradiction involved in the above deliberate summary of 'Determinism' [the italics are mine] ought to preclude any necessity for further scrutiny.

a theological fiction. In the Churches it is, of course, an evangelical platitude, but it remains at the same time the one foundation fact of religion upon which all sections of Christianity unhesitatingly agree. In some quarters, more especially amidst what is miscalled 'high' life, together with such as are grouped under 'the smart set,' sin is voted a mere social scarecrow. Bishop Butler's words of the eighteenth century have become even more applicable to the twentieth: 'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasure of the world.'

But in some respects our day leaves his behind. To define 'sin' as the Christian interruption of the pleasures of the world, would by no means satisfy some much-advocated philosophies of the hour. Such a description, however untrue, is wise compared with the philosophical and moral insanity which declares, on the one hand, that 'if God is responsible for man's existence, God is responsible for man's acts,'[2] and on the other, that 'the sooner the idea of moral responsibility is got rid of, the better it will be for society.'[3] This being in turn only an echo of the Continental

[1] Butler's *Analogy*, Preface, p. 1.
[2] *God and my Neighbour*, by R. Blatchford, p. 131.
[3] *The Service of Man*, by Cotter Morison, cheap. ed., p. 111.

school which roundly asserts that 'We ought no more to consider a man who acts responsible, for he is as much an automaton as a tiger or a rock. General irresponsibility, such is scientific truth.' [1]

In face of all this welter of words, it is most desirable that we should distinctly understand what is herein essential to true Christian faith, so that in the midst of the distractions and superficialities of the time, the protest of belief may emanate from mind no less than from heart.

It cannot be denied that the Christian pulpit has often been and yet is not seldom to blame here. Thoughtless hymns and reckless sermons, overflowing with unjustifiable epithets, have been only too abundant. Tremendous declamations have created popular Sunday evening echoes, but in Monday's cooler precision they have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Hence the world of sensible men, instead of being convicted in respect of sin, have concluded that preachers were unfair and Christian doctrine unreliable. There is happily good reason for rejoicing that modern levelling up is affecting also the average Christian pulpit; but the practice of recklessly 'bummin' away,' as Tennyson's 'northern farmer' puts it, is far from having yet died out. Yet is it always worse than useless to call men 'sinners,' unless it be also made plain what sin is, and wherein its evil consists. And this becomes the more necessary in face of recent movements of thought within the pale of Christendom, which, whilst undoubtedly well-intended, and perhaps helpful in the end, are

[1] *The Universal Illusion of Free Will*, by M. Hamon, p. 134.

meanwhile tending to confusion and playing into the hands of unbelief.[1]

Since we can here only summarize and suggest, it will be well to be as clear as possible.

(1) Christian doctrine unequivocally asserts the positive reality of sin, because there is no other valid explanation of undeniable facts.

When the question is asked whether sin is the real foundation of the Christian gospel, the true answer must be both 'yes,' and 'no.' Even as the foundations of any building are, and yet are not, the reason of its firmness. An earthquake soon demonstrates such ambiguity. If a house is to be a safe abode, its foundations must themselves be well founded in the solid and unwavering earth. So, viewed only humanly, the message of Christianity does indeed obtain its

[1] Thus in a recent utterance (*Christian Commonwealth*, June 27, 1907) the pastor of the City Temple declares that 'It is not too much to say that the thought of sin has lain like a nightmare upon the Christian consciousness for many centuries, and it is time we got rid of it.' It is, like many others recently from the same source, a wild sentence which no context can redeem from unwisdom. 'For ages the theologian has been telling us, and the average Christian professes to believe it, that sin is some vague, terrible, baffling force which has divided man from God, and made it inevitable that God should take some sort of vengeance upon him.' As for this last clause, the writer cannot but know that numbers of the 'theologians' whom he seems never tired of abusing, would utterly repudiate such a notion. The first half of the sentence certainly represents the whole attitude of the Bible, and it is confessedly a 'new' theology indeed, which calls upon us to begin our reconstruction of belief by casting the Bible behind our back as a mere 'nightmare.' This is cutting the Gordian knot with a vengeance. 'The situation has been painted in the most sombre colours.' True. But by whom? By theologians? Not nearly so vividly as by historians. Gibbon's testimony herein is quite as 'sombre' as Calvin's.

emphasis from the basal fact of moral evil in mankind. But beneath this basis 'the hope of the gospel' rests upon the love of God, as the central and unshakable reality of the universe. Man has so really created the evil out of the potentialities afforded by divine love, that sin is quite as truly defined as the cause of unmeasured sorrow to God, as of greatest woe to man.

For it is not a question here of the Bible, or of revelation. In presence of undeniable fact, Scripture comes not as a revelation but an explanation. The Bible needs not to give us information, for we know herein too much already. It rather supplies us with an estimate, and in pointing to the true source of the ill leads on equally to its cure and its prevention. If any man could show any more reasonable explanation, or any better way of dealing with moral evil, than the Christian doctrine of sin, it would be his highest duty to do so, and ours also to follow him.

But the mistakes of much-abused theologians are irrelevant. They may have been many. Certainly they have not been more than those of their critics, or of other teachers, either in science or philosophy. They have, moreover, given ample pledges of both repentance and amendment. Whatever their imperfections, the facts remain which they have endeavoured to face. The modern daily press is sufficient witness to these. For it virtually lives, as we daily see, by making known most vividly, most widely, and with most lurid illustration, the darkest deeds of humanity. From such testimony it is made tragically plain that the guilty reality of moral evil, and the wofulness of its consequences, constitute the two great abiding

pillars of earth's hell. Upon these rests the awful weight of nine-tenths of human suffering, misery, and despair. One might as well pronounce influenza to be a doctor's dream, or cancer the mere fad of pathology, as deny the dire realities of wrong which abound in every city of every nation under heaven.

Such facts can no more be frowned than smiled away. The hardihood of 'deterministic' denial of responsibility is here of no more avail than the optimisms of religious sentimentality. If, however, the first thing in dealing with disease be to diagnose it accurately and so proceed to understand it, then the Christian doctrine that sin is the violation of the law of God, justifies itself alike in the truth of its analysis and the hope attaching to its treatment.

(2) As an explanation of life's darkest facts, however sin may be defined, it comes to the same thing in the end. The very root and essence of sin is the positive activity of a conscious personality. To say with one breath that 'Evil is a negative not a positive term'[1] and with the next that 'sin is selfishness,' is simple self-contradiction, however well-intended. Negative selfishness is unthinkable. The account given by the same writer on another occasion, is much more to the point. 'Dr. Parker in his pulpit once gave in his dramatic fashion a description of sin that I have never heard equalled—it makes one shiver to think of it. It was a raised hand, a clenched fist, and a blow in the face of God.'[2]

Some other definitions of sin recently put forth are

[1] *The New Theology*, by R. J. Campbell, pp. 43, 52.
[2] *City Temple Sermons*, by R. J. Campbell (1903), p. 67.

well worthy of regard, both by reason of their source and their significance. Thus one thoughtful and earnest writer speaking for the newest theology, says: 'Our answer, therefore, to the question What is sin? is: it is an act of the will identifying the man for the time being with the lower alternative. Sin is an act of the will, by a person who might have done better. The lower desire must be willed, either for the inward or the outward life, before there is sin.' [1]

Again, from the standpoint of an eminent scientist we are told, that 'Sin is the deliberate and wilful act of a free agent who sees the better and chooses the worse, and thereby acts injuriously to himself and others. The root of sin is selfishness, whereby needless trouble and pain are inflicted on others; when fully developed it involves moral suicide.' [2]

Still more fully to the same effect says Dr. Tennant: 'The starting-point for all definition with regard to the concept of sinfulness, is, of course, the isolated single act of sin; a sin. This is an activity of the will, expressed in thought, word, or deed, contrary to the individual's conscience, to his notion of what is good or right, his knowledge of the moral law or the will of God. The seat of sin is the will alone. Apart from the conscious volition of a person, there is no such thing as moral goodness or badness.' [3]

In face of these true representations, it is quite beside the mark to say that 'evil is not a principle at

[1] *The New Theology*, by Rhondda Williams, p. 18.

[2] *The Substance of Faith, &c., a Catechism*, by Sir Oliver Lodge, p. 52.

[3] *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, Hulsean Lectures (1901), p. 164, a small treatise well deserving the most careful study.

war with good.'[1] For no Christian teacher has ever said that a 'principle' could be at war with anything. Evil can never be anything but the result of a personal act. Apart from an acting personality sin is unthinkable. And every personal act is by its very nature positive. To speak of evil, or the devil, as a 'vacuum,' is only true in the same sense as in acoustics, where every pulse of sound means that a vacuum is following on the heels of a condensation. The negative aspect or estimate of sin is always and only the result of the preceding positive act of the will. In a word, the negative is caused by the positive. Whence it immediately follows that whether for cure or for prevention, the hope of betterment demands attention to the positive act. The negative consequence may then be left to take care of itself.

Many features of modern life combine to call for special emphasis on true theology in this respect. In succinct expression, leaving their full consideration to other occasions, they are as follows.

(i) There is in some quarters a distinct endeavour to adapt the ancient Pantheism of the East, by means of the influence of Spinoza, to the modern thought of the West. In so far as this prevails, man ceases to be a responsible person at all. He is merely an automatic part of a 'God' who is nothing more than the totality of the universe. As such, sin is no more possible to him than to the atmosphere.[2]

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 44.

[2] For a frank consideration of this see *Theomonism True*, by the present writer, pp. 428–53; also *The True God, a Modern Summary*, pp. 105–161.

(ii) Very closely verging upon this comes the restatement, from some thoughtful and avowedly Christian sources, of the immanence of God. The starting-point of this new theology is said to be a 're-emphasis of the Christian belief in the divine immanence in the universe and in mankind.' But it is being shown by many capable writers, that it is just as possible to make too much as too little of this undoubtedly true suggestion. To speak carefully and accurately, the divine immanence is never true when set up in solitary prominence. At most it is but a half-truth, requiring for its justification, to mind and heart alike, the cognate truth of the divine transcendence. Without this the personality of God is helplessly lost. And with the loss of the divine goes also the annihilation of the human personality. Sin against the merely immanent God is unthinkable. But it need not here concern us, because neither can science suggest, nor philosophy justify, a God who is only immanent. Divine immanence without divine transcendence is as inconceivable as a coin with only one side. Something may be immanent in nature, but unless it be also transcendent, assuredly there is nothing divine about it—in the usual significance of that term. God, to be God, must be both.

Thus the affirmation that 'it is the immanent God with whom we have to do,' is virtually equivalent to atheistic Pantheism. For without the accompanying transcendent God, there is no 'Whom' to consider. If, however, there were no divine personality, there could be no sin. Taken out of its Johannine context it is not true that 'sin is a violation of law.' There may be many breaches of the law of the land which are

not sins. But well we know that John spoke of the law of God—God not only as the Lawgiver of the universe, but the Father of mankind. In other words sin, to be sin, must be doubly personal. It is the positive act of a person against a person. Yet even this is not all. For it is only in a figurative sense that man can be said to sin against his fellow. It is but as the light of the moon, a pale copy of a more intense reality. Human offences are personal wrongs between equals. 'Sin' is personal rebellion against the transcendent majesty, involved in the authoritative oughtness—the kategorical imperative—of the higher as against the lower. Thus the true definition comes to be that sin is the positive resistance of a finite personality against the infinite Personality. As to objections which might here be raised in regard to the infinite Personality, the evidence that the latter conception is philosophically valid is given elsewhere.[1] The sinfulness of the resistance comes out most vividly, when it is borne in mind that the law of God is always and only the expression of the love of God.

(iii) Apart, however, from all relation to divine nature and law, there are also human tendencies, showing signs to-day of recrudescence in new colours, which, if triumphant, would surely put an end to sin. They have been mentioned above under the name of 'Determinism.' But it is manifest at the outset that such a name, even if scientifically suggested, philosophically accepted, and popularly adopted, is none the less utterly false. The fatal syllable which is omitted begs

[1] See *Theomonism True*, pp. 290–303: *The True God*, &c., pp. 109–122.

the whole question under dispute, and comprises the entire difference between the moral and the non-moral, i.e. between mankind viewed as moral persons, and regarded as irresponsible things. The modern restatement of naturalistic fatalism as quoted above, is truly and only truly named 'Determinedism.' Its basis is thus lucidly expressed by two of its chief exponents: 'Man is determined. He is the inevitable product of the surroundings in which he lives, and in which his ancestors lived.'[1] 'Man is the creature of heredity and environment.'—'His heredity and environment are he.'[2] This being so, manhood is gone, and only thinghood remains. Such a transformation can only be expressed, as a theory of human nature, by the unattractive but true and appropriate term 'Determinedism.'

Against it Christian doctrine makes emphatic protest, on all grounds.[3] Whether such a theory be hurled upon us from academic heights, or persistently advocated in ephemeral journalism, it is as fatal to morality as to theology. If sin be impossible, humanity sinks beyond all rescuing in a whirlpool of non-moral animality. Manhood is for ever lost in the merely mechanical clatter of 'anthropistic' things. It may be difficult to decide whether the sense of sin is, or is not, evanescing from civilization.[4] But it is a

[1] *Illusion of Free Will*, M. Hamon, p. 115.

[2] *Not Guilty*, R. Blatchford, p. 199, &c.

[3] See *Clarion Fallacies*, by present writer, pp. 47–105, also *Guilty* as above mentioned passim.

[4] Sir Oliver Lodge opines that 'as a matter of fact the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all' (*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1904, p. 466). Whilst the pastor of the City Temple says, 'I am inclined to question the statement that the sense of sin is feebler than it used to be' (*City Temple Sermons*, p. 64).

perfectly plain deduction from sound philosophical principles, that when the sense of sin has wholly departed, manhood will be extinct. The man who cannot sin against God, certainly cannot sin against his fellow man. The civilization embodying that attitude will necessarily echo M. Hamon: 'To-day it must suffice us to have shown that there is no such thing as moral responsibility, and that all men are irresponsible.' Bipedal automata will then constitute the soulless denizens of a mechanical 'Paradise restored.'

(3) From the truth concerning sin as an act, it follows that sinfulness, whether applied to the individual or the race, includes two distinct elements neither of which can be ignored or trifled with. The words by which they are known are familiar enough in religious literature, as when hymns and sermons and prayers refer to the 'guilt' and the 'power' of sin. But there is great room for more careful thought concerning them both, and any movement of the modern mind, whatever name it bear, is a Christian gain, if it compels the correction of former mistakes and helps towards the clearing up of conventional confusion.

Human consciousness as distinguished from that of the animal, is ever of three dimensions. The animal lives only in the present; man recalls the past and anticipates the future ever whilst he realizes the present. Hence it comes to pass that he has not done with the wrong of yesterday because it is past. It is his still. In a word he is guilty by reason of it. Nor does the passing of the time in the least lessen his

responsibility for that which he then did. Rather, if further acts of sin are added day by day, guilt may increase, just as unpaid debts accumulate. For no one ever yet heard of debts paying themselves simply by being ignored. This is the moral result of the past. As such it can never be inherited, or transferred, or transmitted. It belongs wholly and solely to the actual sinner, and is for ever irrevocable, irreversible, irreparable.

It is here that there seems to be greatest need of perspicuity in modern Christian teaching. For whilst it is too true that vast numbers of people have been sadly misled by some aspects of the old theology, they are not likely to find much more light in the verbal nebulosities which constitute certain other views now characterized as 'new.' Unquestionably theology has erred in treating the first three chapters of Genesis as literal and prosaic history, with the corollary that because of it men and women are but 'moral corpses,' and 'the whole human race are doomed to perdition for Adam's sin.' But it is certainly no sufficient statement of the truth simply to say that 'the doctrine of the Fall is an absurdity, from the point of view both of ethical consistency and common sense.'[1] Whether it be poetry, legend, or

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 60. The whole chapter from which this is taken is open to criticism so grave that it cannot be here expressed. We will take but two instances. 'Right through Christian history the tendency has run to look upon the world as the ruins of a divine plan marred by man's perversity and self-will. It is time we got rid of it, for it has had a blighting, deadening influence upon hopeful endeavour for the good of the race. It is not integral to Christianity, for Jesus never said a word about it,

tradition—call it what we will—there is, as Sir Oliver Lodge has well said, sober and solemn truth in the ancient story. We do right now to interpret it, not only by the rest of the Bible as including the teaching of Christ and His apostles, but also in the light of all our modern knowledge. And the result certainly is not contradiction but illumination. As to our Saxon forefathers blood was blood, and that was real enough for all lessons of love and war, whilst to our modern scrutiny it is serum and corpuscles, involving circulation and phagocytosis, with all physiology and bacteriology in their train, so was the old allegory true enough, tragic enough, comprehensive enough, to serve its original purpose; whilst now it not only honestly but emphatically reminds us, when lit up by modern history and philosophy, of all that to-day most needs

and did not even allude to it indirectly.' One is, alas! obliged to say that all this is utterly misleading. Not only through Christian history but through the whole Bible, from beginning to end, runs the tendency here deprecated. If this is to be cast overboard as mere religious rubbish, then certainly the Bible, including the New Testament, is not worth the paper it is printed on. Again, it is quite untrue that it has always had a 'blighting' effect. To consider only one case, it has been a potent factor in the doctrine of Methodism; but no man who knows anything of English history during the last three centuries would have the hardihood to affirm that the development of the Methodist Churches has had 'a deadening effect upon hopeful endeavour.' It has rather been said with truth that the Evangelical Revival alone saved England from revolution. How any one acquainted with the New Testament can make the next statement above quoted, passes comprehension. Surely it is direct enough reference to the reality of innate evil when Jesus asserted that 'out of the heart proceed all things which defile a man,' and solemnly warned those who rejected Him, 'If ye believe not that I am He ye will die in your sins,' &c. Such a portraiture as a general fact, indicates, one would think, sufficient ruin of a divine plan.

moral emphasis. Personal blameworthiness as the essence of sin; with the added consequence of unmeasured suffering to others besides the sinner; and this continued still further by means of heredity,—these are alike the lessons of the hour and of the ages.

It cannot, in general, be said too plainly that Christianity is not bound to theological mistakes, any more than science is bound to the errors of scientists. Good men have said some fearfully false things in the name of the true gospel. But it must always be remembered that to them they seemed true. Had they known what we know, they never would have said them. Naturally they can no more be held responsible for what they did not know, than we can be held guiltless for what we knowingly do wrong. There never was such a thing as 'total depravity,' or 'hereditary guilt.' But use what terms we may, human depravity is real, and the sins of the fathers do bring suffering upon the children. The whole principle of heredity may be justified elsewhere. Here we only view its relation to sin. Whilst transmitted guilt is unthinkable, the fact remains that morally as surely and sadly as physically, children do enter upon the struggle of life maimed and half handicapped by those who should have started them with the very best equipment. The suffering is the child's; but the sin is that of the parents.

(4) Yet heredity does not destroy personality, any more than does environment. Cruelly handicapped a child may be, but so long as it is sane and human, the potential moral consciousness of the babe develops

into the actual personal power and responsibility of the man. The degree to which any child is handicapped is quite immaterial to Christian doctrine, because its foundation axiom is the love of God. Love divine cannot prevent human sin. But it can be trusted to recognize to the uttermost, in every single case, how great or small have been the disadvantages under which personality realizes itself in human life. The God and Father whom Christ reveals, will never expect ten talents from the servant to whom only one was entrusted.

In regard to the normal man, sin, according to Christianity, is not merely, as we have seen, a positive act of the will, but is further defined as a violation of law, viz. the law of God. Here, however, it is not enough to say that sin is selfishness. Because the universal connotation of selfishness is as relates to our fellow men, whereas sin relates to God even more than to them. It is here that some statements of the 'new theology' go most wildly astray. To say that—'Sin has never injured God except through man. It is the God within who is injured by it, rather than the God without,'[1]—is indeed difficult to understand at all. But so far as it has meaning, the reply seems demanded that if the divine personality be not sufficiently 'without' the human to be capable of suffering injury, we are either lost in Pantheism or crushed in Determinedism, as above pointed out. And, furthermore, if Christ's word is to count for anything, if the Fatherhood of God is aught more than a religious delusion, whatever may be meant by the phrase 'except through man,'

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 53.

assuredly a father's heart can be hurt by the wilful rebellion of a child.[1]

It comes simply to this. Christ, as the Founder of Christianity, asserted with all possible emphasis that there were two great commands. This type of 'new theology' flatly contradicts Him, in declaring that there is but one. God, even though the Father, may be left altogether out of account. All that is to be considered is, that 'we either live for the self at the expense of the whole, or we are fulfilling the self by serving the whole.' Surely, whatever theory of inspiration be held, here is occasion to quote from Malachi. 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a Father, where is Mine honour? and if I be a Master where is My fear?' The theology which is so 'new' as to find no place at all for the fear of God,

[1] The preceding page of the same work says: 'When theologians talk of the wrath of God against sin, and the wrong which sin has inflicted upon God, they employ figures of speech which are distinctly misleading. In fact they do not seem to have a clear idea as to what sin really is.' The last sentence is rather a large one. In this case, at all events, the poor theologians do but echo the whole Bible. If there be no 'wrath of God' against sin, the New Testament is the most misleading book in the world, and is fit only for oblivion. Certainly, on these lines, the Christ of the Gospels was hopelessly deluded. There is no need of quotation to that effect. When the writer goes on to ask, 'Why should God feel Himself so much aggrieved by Adam's peccadillo?' it is difficult to realize that one is not reading the *Clarion*, rather than the pages of a teacher claiming to be especially Christian. Philosophically, no less than theologically, the question is monstrous. It is, alas! but of the same character as another on the same page: 'Why should a trivial act of transgression have sent the world all wrong?' Personal respect alone prevents one from characterizing such queries as they deserve. This kind of talk may be good Secularism, but it is a poor representation of 'advance' in Christian theology.

or the honour due to His Fatherhood, is so far at least not true. Modern unbelief has spoken falsely enough in saying[1] that 'Christianity concerns itself with God and man, putting God first and man last.' But that in the Christian Churches there should arise a doctrine of sin which puts man first and last, and God nowhere, is alike bewildering and saddening. Whether theology be old or new is a trifle by the side of the unchanging truth which applies to the two Christ-confirmed great commands, viz. that he who does not keep them both keeps neither.[2]

(5) The Christian doctrine of sin is not affected by the modern conception of human nature as traceable back, on phylogenetic lines, to a common ancestry with anthropoid apes. It may well be that the actualities of

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 109. Cf. 1 John iii. 17, iv. 20, 21.

[2] The best-known advocate of the newest theology also says (*Christian Commonwealth*, June 27, 1907), 'There is not a single human action, not a single human thought, which can properly be called sinful, which is not a wrong done to humanity. You cannot sin against God without sinning against man.' This is sufficiently contradicted by the writer's own adopted figure quoted above. To strike God 'a blow in the face,' is certainly no wrong done to man. But generally, any attempt to emphasize the second great command, as Christ enunciated it, by utterly ignoring or dismissing the first, is poor theology, whether it be old or new. To say that 'it is no use trying to separate between God and man when considering this question,' is altogether misleading. If God be no more and no other than man, all theology together is but a waste of words. With all sincere respect, Joseph was more philosophical, as well as truly theological, than the present pastor of the City Temple, when he said (without any denial of the wrong which would have been done to Potiphar) 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' Nor is there any valid reason whatever for lessening the emphasis of the repentance of one who fell where Joseph stood: 'Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.'

the case, for ever hidden from us but forcefully allegorized in the Fall story, simply involve the emergence of the moral from the non-moral condition, even as at some period in the remote past the living emerged from the non-living, and the conscious from the non-conscious. How, need not here concern us. There is no more warrant in Scripture than out of it, for the old rhetorical delusion that physical death came into the whole animal world through human sin. The beginnings of moral evil, like those of intellectual development, must have been elementary. Picture it as we may, with the course of upward evolution there must have been for moral as for physical sight first moments of glimmering. But with the first perception of the higher as contrasted with the lower, came, in corresponding elementary yet real degree, the exercise of choice. There is no Christian need whatever to suppose that for the race any more than for a child to-day, one lower choice involves the ruin of character. It is the perpetuation of such choices, the continual ratification and repetition of past lower choices, which constitutes, now as of yore, the only 'sin unto death.' Hence it is on the racial scale, rather than on the individual, that the real root of sin becomes most manifest. It is found in the monstrous and unchecked development of that principle of self-preservation which inheres in all animal life as a natural and necessary instinct. The point at which innocent selfness becomes guilty selfishness, is just when and where, in the light of increased knowledge, it insists upon its own desires as against perceived duty towards a higher self, towards others, towards God. The sinfulness

of sin is measured by the degree in which these three are known, and consciously, contemptuously, rebelliously resisted.

Of the 'ten commandments' associated with Moses, we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Now it is sufficient to point out that they represent an intermediate stage between the initial and final estimates of sin. The latter we find—as Strauss amongst others has reminded us [1]—in Christianity. As the brightest light must ever cast the darkest shadows, so does Christ's doctrine intensify the sinfulness of sin as nothing else has done in all earth's religions or philosophies. No greater mistake can be made than to speak of sin as though it were either a thing which might be estimated in the lump, or an act so dire that differences of degree are irrelevant. Sin in the aggregate is never more or less than the accumulation of individual acts. And if there are degrees of light, there must perforce also be degrees of darkness. Goodness and badness are in themselves utterly indeterminate terms. Christ brings us so much more knowledge of the true, the high, the holy, that the reality and intensity of sin in His presence become blackest of all. For it then involves rebellion against the goodness, and scorn of the love, of God; rejection of the highest in the ideal of Christ's commands as enforced by His life and example; contempt for the noblest potentialities of self, after the fashion in which

[1] 'With reference to all that bears upon the love of God and of our neighbours, upon purity of heart and the individual life, nothing can be added to the moral intuition which Jesus Christ has left us' (*Life of Jesus*, People's Edition, 1864, p. 625, &c.).

Esau chose the immediate satisfaction of appetite rather than honour of the first-born; trampling on the rights, needs, hopes of others, rather than fulfilling the obligations and opportunities of such a brotherhood as Christ deduces from the divine Fatherhood.

To all which must yet be added a genuinely negative aspect of sin which admits of no less emphasis than the positive. For, according to Christ's standard, sins of omission are quite as real and as deadly as sins of commission. The most solemn words of condemnation attributed to Him in the New Testament, are addressed to those who under other systems would scarcely be held guilty at all, seeing that they only let slip opportunities of doing good. Well, therefore, may Christian and sometimes also un-Christian moralists find here, in such an elevated and all-comprehending ideal of duty, the only hope of 'the golden age' for civilization.

(6) The more carefully the whole question of moral evil is considered, the more manifest does it become that the Bible doctrine of sin which culminates in the teaching of Christ, not only enforces greatest reverence for God as Creator,[1] but puts highest honour upon

[1] Here, again, not even respect and affection for the pastor of the City Temple must suppress an indignant protest against such a travesty as we find in the *New Theology* (p. 59). 'Surely if God knew beforehand that the world would go wrong, the blame for the catastrophe was not all man's. If He were so baffled and horror-stricken as the dogmatic theologians make out, He ought to have been more careful about the way He did His work at the beginning; a world which went wrong so early and so easily, was anything but very good, although He pronounced it to be so according to the Genesis writer.' Such writing savours of a third-rate Secularist

man. The doctrine so industriously propagated to-day, that 'no man is under any circumstances to be blamed for anything he may say or do'[1] involves the greatest degradation of human nature conceivable.[2] For in such case, as already shown, men cease to be men and become things. To compare this with the language of the eighth Psalm—'Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour'—and mark how Christ confirms[3] and intensifies it, is to apprehend the ethical worth of Christian doctrine, and to appreciate the estimate of Prof. Huxley as to the value of the Bible for educational purposes.[4]

(7) It is manifest at a glance that here, as every-

pamphlet, rather than sober words on a most solemn subject from a Christian teacher. The philosophy is as poor as the tone is nigh unto blasphemy. Seeing that foreknowledge is always a mere accommodation to the limits of human speech, and has absolutely nothing to do with the conduct of a free agent, the 'blame' for any such 'catastrophe' as sin is certainly and always 'all man's.' The world never 'went wrong' at all. It was and always is, so far as sin is concerned, a morally free being who went wrong, i.e. one whom God Himself could not compel to do otherwise. The 'all wrong,' is an actuality for which the doer is alone and for ever responsible. The potentiality of nature which made him able to do wrong is quite another matter. It is sufficiently justified, as a divine gift, by the consideration that if man could not have done wrong, assuredly he could never have done right, and all moral being would be at an end. To say, therefore, that God 'ought to have been more careful, &c.' is in any Christian teacher, no matter how good and sincere, reprehensibly reckless language, not merely untrue but altogether unworthy of the theme.

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 137, &c.

[2] See *Not Guilty*, &c., by present writer, p. 80, &c.

[3] Matt. xii. 12.

[4] His actual words are given in *Clarion Fallacies*, p. 41, taken from his *Essays on Controverted Questions*, pp. 52, 53.

where, when moral sanity prevails, honour and duty, knowledge and responsibility, go hand in hand. The notion that 'no man is answerable for his own acts'[1] is sufficiently self-stultifying, because then the man ceases to be man and becomes either brute or thing. Yet is he manifestly neither if, in any true sense, his acts are 'his own.' But the very insisting upon accountability to the uttermost, which distinguishes Christian doctrine, at once exalts man to the highest pinnacle of being conceivable, and then claims from him all effort towards a corresponding character. In this sense, it is a glorious thing to be a sinner. The humblest Salvation Army lass, reminding the man in the streets that he is a sinner, is paying him and humanity a far greater compliment than all the publications of 'deterministic Humanism' combined. For if he be a sinner, he may become a saint, which, when truly estimated, is the noblest dignity on earth. But if he cannot be a sinner, then indeed the psalmist uttered more truth than he knew when he declared: 'Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.'[2]

(8) But Christian doctrine further insists that the real tragedy of sin is only worthily appreciated at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ. This will be more appropriately considered under the Christian theme of the Atonement. But no estimate of sin is ever either reliable, or final, which does not take into fullest and tenderest account the anguish of the Son of Man in Gethsemane, and the agony of the Son of God at

[1] *Not Guilty*, p. 10.
[2] Ps. xlix. 20.

Calvary. For these unspeakable throes of the purest heart that ever beat on earth were, whatever else they signify, the direct outcome of human sin.

(9) Thus the Christian doctrine of sin, in its blending of deepest guilt with highest hope, in its equal emphasizing of responsibility with potentiality, opens the way for such a development of moral character as makes this life well worth living, and at the same time points to a future life even more worthy of our noblest longings. The two are inseparable. Already the world of humanity is so far evolved upwards that no man in civilized countries dare deny that character is the supreme possession, without which the monarch's throne and the millionaire's pile become despicable alike. But as the noblest structures ever need the deepest foundations, so do the very solemnity and intensity of the Christian doctrine of sin alone afford sure basis for the building up of a character-ideal worthy of the best capacities of manhood, and satisfactory to all our natural yearnings towards the perpetuation of the best. For whilst it would be simply brutal to suggest that if only a man has wealth and power he need not concern himself about character, it is no less inhuman to tell us that when through constant struggle for the highest we have made the best of the present, we should be thankful [1] to die as the dog dies, or go out as the fire does, with neither thought of nor care for anything but oblivion.

Waiving, however, for the moment, the question of the future after death, the pressing need of the hour is for ideals that may become sanctions, and pass thence

[1] Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, cheap edition, p. 74.

into duties to be embodied in actions. From these may be derived a hope of something for this life and for all men, far better than the sufferings and sorrows, the misery and brutality, the degradation and despair, which yet enter so tragically into the very fibre of our modern civilization. In which direction shall men look for the surest and speediest hope of such amelioration? To the pseudo-philosophy which affirms that 'man cannot sin against God,' and expresses its creed thus —'Briefly my religion is to do the best I can for humanity. I am a Socialist, a Determinist, and a Rationalist, because I believe that Socialism, Determinism, and Rationalism will be beneficial to mankind.'[1] Well, yes, such words may stand. But all depends upon their interpretation. The Christian contention, based upon the facts of love divine and human sin, is that the followers of Jesus Christ are the truest Rationalists[2]; that the only real Determinists are those who themselves determine, in response to His call, to turn from known sin to genuine holiness; and that the only Socialism—in the very language of the writer just quoted—which 'is worth fighting for,' or which 'will ever win the love and rouse the enthusiasm of the people,' is that based on 'Altruism' as the synonym of 'Christ's glorious gospel of love.' Suppose we take the Socialist movement, at its best, as embodying the noblest hope of coming humanity. What then? This. 'Sever the Socialist movement from the altruistic sentiment and it is a lost cause. Never without the impetus of human love can Socialism

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 189.
[2] See Luke xii. 57.

be established.'[1] True; true, in very deed. But the man who cannot sin, cannot love.

See *Altruism, Christ's Glorious Gospel of Love against Man's Dismal Science of Greed*, pp. 6, 10, by R. Blatchford, *Clarion* Office, one penny.

Whilst these pages are passing through the press, another volume by the Pastor of the City Temple appears, entitled *New Theology Sermons* (Williams & Norgate). After careful perusal it still appears to me that both the attitude adopted and the language employed in regard to sin, however lofty the intention, are gravely calculated to mislead. In face of history and experience no less than the whole teaching of the Bible, it should not be said that the subject of sin 'has occupied in Christian thought a place altogether disproportionate to its true worth.' One cannot but regard it, moreover, as alike untrue to fact to allege that the false emphasis upon sin 'has tended to make men morbidly self-conscious'—unless the prodigal was so when he 'came to himself'—and untrue to Christian philosophy to avow that 'sin has never injured God except through man.' The further affirmation that 'Jesus very seldom used the word sin,' is also unwarranted. For if in the fragmentary records of His words which we possess it is found some thirty times, the inference is inevitable that in all His teachings, if only we could know them, it would be met with very often rather than very seldom.

There are many excellent things in the discourse upon 'Sin and Salvation,' but its misrepresentation may be summed up in a word. Selfishness is there defined as an attitude of mind and heart towards man alone. As such, whilst all selfishness is sin, all sin is not selfishness. Certainly if God be at all what Jesus taught, it is just as possible and as morally wrong to sin against Him as against one's fellow men. To keep the second command by ignoring the first, never was and never can be the ideal learned of Jesus Christ.

So too in regard to 'The mistake of sin.' Sin is a mistake indeed, in one sense, but essentially it is a great deal more. No mere mistake can ever be sinful. Nor can any amount of explanation justify the assertion that 'sin is a blundering quest for God.' Indeed the writer sufficiently contradicts himself when he adds, 'I do not mean that sin is an innocent quest for anything.' But a blunder, if it be a blunder only, is necessarily innocent. Whilst if, as is afterwards affirmed, 'a sinner always knows he is doing wrong,' then it is a blunder no longer. How any man can be seeking God when he knows that he is doing wrong, may be left to casuistry to say. This at least is plain, that to do wrong is a great deal more than a mistake. It is, as Sir Oliver Lodge has well said, the wilful preference of the lower and the worse rather than the better and the higher. That is, it is positive moral evil. And it is even more truly sin against the love and law of God, than it is against the welfare of one's fellows.

III

THE LOVE OF GOD—THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

'For the Son of Man also did not come to be waited upon, but to wait on others, and to give His life as the redemption-price for a multitude of people.'

MARK x. 35, Weymouth's Translation.

'"A ransom for many," in room of many. His death is not a common death, and Jesus does not here conceive it simply as suffered for conscience' sake, but as "for many." In it He endures the tragedy of His pre-eminence. Though His grace concedes to those who follow Him fellowship in His sufferings, yet in the article and moment of Sacrifice, He is without a fellow. It is a cup which He alone can drink; a baptism which none can share. And it is so because He stands where no one can stand beside Him, in a death which is "a ransom for many."'

DR. FAIRBAIRN, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 411.

'From the point of view of the individualistic theory it is impossible to account for Christ's experience on grounds of justice; and we are reduced to the various forms of legal fiction which meet us in the older theories of the Atonement. But, if God's government be social as well as individual, and justice be concerned with the promotion of the welfare of mankind as a whole, as well as of the individual units who compose it, then the voluntary acceptance by the innocent of the consequences of social wrongdoing, may prove the means whereby the moral progress and ultimate salvation of mankind are to be brought about.'

DR. W. A. BROWN, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 293.

III

THE LOVE OF GOD—THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

'If any one sins, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is an atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'—1 JOHN ii. 1, 2 (Weymouth).

No subject in the whole scope of Christian doctrine is so familiar, or has caused so much disputation, as that generally known by the name of 'The Atonement.' From the second century to the present hour it has been the theme of earnest discussion. The mere history of the various views held concerning it is a literature in itself. No thesis has been more open to the modifications of a changing environment. No Christian truth has suffered more at the hands of its friends. No doctrine has drawn upon itself such keen and bitter hostility from without. Yet its abiding hold on Christian hearts is manifest in the tenacity with which myriads cling to it. Tender reverence as well as intense devotion are associated with it in innumerable hymns, sermons, and public services, of the present no less than of past generations of sincere believers. Its appeal to Christian minds is witnessed by the vast and still increasing library of works in which every possible phase of the subject is scrutinized to the utmost. Nor

is there the least sign of any abatement in the interest thus displayed. All the eager volumes and booklets, pamphlets and reviews dealing with the 'new theology' of the hour, give prominent attention to this theme.[1] It would be difficult indeed to say which party of believers use the stronger language, those who under the aegis of 'new' truth denounce the older dogmatic theology as misleading and harmful, or those who on behalf of 'evangelical' doctrine declare that the views now so earnestly promulgated are but reiterations of bygone heresies.

So comes it to pass that to-day, in spite of all the faith of the centuries and the controversies of many generations, this doctrine seems yet to cause more hesitation, perplexity, difficulty, doubt, denial, than any other associated with Christianity. The question thus becomes inevitable, What do all these affirmations and denials mean? Is there something really and radically wrong in the whole conception, so that, if we are to have a Christianity at once pure and powerful, it must be discarded altogether? Or have theologians here again erred so seriously, that the whole ground they have thus covered with definition and discussion must be ploughed up and laid out afresh? Or is it simply a case in which popular cobwebs of mind have grown big and foul through carelessness, and thus have enveloped with ugliness and falsity that which is essentially true and beautiful?

All three of these queries have been answered in the

[1] The work perhaps best known, by Rev. R. J. Campbell, has three lengthy chapters out of fourteen upon this question.

affirmative, with many grades of opinion between the views expressed. There would seem to be no hope of exact unanimity. But this is only the more reason why every sincere believer should think for himself, and having arrived at his own conclusions, help others to do the same. One of the best modern manuals of Christian theology [1] has well summarized the present situation thus. 'In addition to all the great theories that have been developed, there has been a great variety of individual views, opening one aspect or another of the subject. Many of these have been of little value, but some have been rich and helpful. Christian students have done valuable service by thinking for themselves on this high theme, even though their views have not gained general acceptance. Reverent study, if it is manly and sincere, cannot fail to bring some real contribution to the knowledge of Christ.'

In this spirit, and for the express purpose of helping those who have little time or opportunity for detailed research, we may here attempt a summary of the chief elements of the case, with their most important issues.

1. It is necessary at the outset, even in a general statement, to be as clear as possible concerning the terms employed and the axioms assumed. Unfortunately it is just here where the difficulty begins. It is scarcely too much to say that the main term of all, viz. the word 'atonement,' is so helplessly ambiguous,

[1] Dr. W. N. Clarke's *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 320. On the whole no better work can be recommended to the sincere student in these days.

as generally printed, that it is either confusing or useless without a distinct pronunciation by the speaking voice. Unless it be thus differently pronounced, no one can tell from the printed page whether by the word atonement a writer means 'atone-ment' or 'at-one-ment.' Yet in such distinction lies almost the whole of the doctrinal difference which divides believer from believer, and constitutes the very core of the conflict so often and so earnestly waged. It is very greatly to be desired that this ambiguity should be entirely dismissed, either by definite printing or by the employment of another word.[1] Seeing that certain theological theories which once prevailed, such as those of Irenaeus and Origen, Anselm and Calvin, are so dead as to be mere matters of history, the main and final question of to-day is really expressed in the simple form, Did Jesus atone for us or not? If He did, then the word 'reconciliation' does not cover the whole case, or express the whole truth. That is to say, reconciliation between men and God may be conceived as taking place, with or without the element of atoning. The

[1] As Dr. W. N. Clarke does in the volume referred to. He wisely remarks: 'Both in theology and in common Christian speech, the name atonement has been the favourite designation for Christ's work, but it is never applied to that work in the Scriptures. The name 'reconciliation' seems to be best for a general designation of the work of Christ, for the reasons that it sets forth what He accomplished rather than the means by which He accomplished it, and that it contains less of the figurative than the other names. It is possible that we may seem to limit ourselves in advance and miss the true point of view, if we select a comprehensive name at all. Nevertheless we shall do best if we study what Christ accomplished as reconciliation between God and men, and on the whole we shall find the same a help rather than a hindrance to clear understanding." (*Outline*, &c., p. 317).

latter is expressed by the term at-one-ment, the former by the term atonement. But it would be great gain to clearness if, once and for all, it could be understood that the term atonement, however printed, should be pronounced 'atonement' and allowed to stand as the summary, in a word, of the view that the reconciliation which is by all acknowledgement the final aim of Christ's whole work, could not, did not, and does not, take place without some real, necessary, vicarious, objective expiation on His part, such as God could not, if He would, ignore, and man would not, if he could, effect.

The belief, on the other hand, that no such expiation was, or is, in any sense necessary—the Abelardian view, as distinct not only from that of Irenaeus and Origen, but also from that of Athanasius and Augustine as well as Anselm—may well be expressed by the plain word 'reconciliation.' This would cover the whole contention of the 'new theology,' and help to clearness of conviction on either side. The fact that the word 'atonement' does not occur in the New Testament, whilst the word 'reconciliation' does, is no objection to the former, which may be, indeed, just as truly and conveniently employed as the word 'Trinity.' Such a differentiation, however, by no means involves that Paul's usage of the word 'reconciliation' in his letter to the Romans is void of all expiatory significance. The whole context there sufficiently protects his meaning.[1] We are now concerned with the modern

[1] See note on p. 129 in Sanday and Headlam's *Romans, Internat. Crit. Commentary.*

discussion in which, above all else, perspicuity is needed.[1]

2. As regards the foundations of belief, we must be content here to assume the Bible as the rule of faith, and the New Testament as the reliable delineator of genuine Christianity. Questions concerning the authority of Scripture, or the effects of the Higher Criticism, may be separately considered. Assuming, now, the validity of our Christian records, the first general statement we are driven to make is this, that it is impossible to read the New Testament without being struck with the special emphasis put upon the death of Christ, both by Himself and by all His disciples whose written words are before us. Gospels, Acts, doctrinal epistles, pastoral epistles, as well as the remarkable and difficult book of the Apocalypse, all are alike in this, that they assert the incomparable uniqueness, the supreme significance, the absolute necessity, of Christ's death, as the very heart of the gospel they assert.

[1] How difficult it is to get away from ambiguity may be illustrated on all hands. Take the following, even from such an excellent little work as Mr. W. L. Walker's *What about the New Theology?* 'The cross was in Christ's view a sacrifice for sin, not to *make amends for it* by suffering, which we grant has been too often taken as the meaning of atonement in this connexion, but *because of sin* and in order to *do away with it*.' Here all (p. 140) manifestly turns upon what the words I have italicized convey—which we are not told. Again (p. 144): 'Man's sin must be acknowledged *and removed* ere the divine forgiveness could come to men with saving power. The death that was the doom of sinful men must be *set forth* in His person and *bowed to* by Him *in man's name*, before even men's own consciences would suffer them to believe in divine forgiveness.' But the words italicized here rather evade than answer the question as to whether there is, or is not, substitution. Which is precisely what, more than anything else, we need to know.

It would not here be profitable to enter into detailed examination of Greek words, or to discuss intricate questions of moral philosophy. The one plain truth before our eyes is that if we accept the authority of the New Testament, there is everywhere assumed throughout its pages an unparalleled solemnity about Christ's death which could only be eliminated by tearing to pieces the whole record. Whatever may be said by the ecclesiastical school of Christian belief concerning the authority of the Church, or by the Ritschlian as to the worth of experience, Christianity must certainly stand or fall, in the ultimate, with the New Testament. To say this does not involve poising an inverted pyramid of doctrine upon any 'proof-text,' or 'proof-passage,' as an apex; for what is contemplated is a fair and full induction from all references in our Christian Scriptures to the subject in question.

Until, however, these records are entirely dismissed as unworthy of regard, it is quite vain under the guise of any theology, whether old or new, to say that in thinking of the Christian doctrine of atonement, or reconciliation, 'the psychological method should take precedence of the historical.'[1] It may be well to inquire 'whether human nature needs anything like a doctrine of atonement'[2]; but to imagine that if a certain school of thought should come to answer such a question in the negative, that will suffice to 'let the doctrine go' no matter what the Christian records say, is to hold both these and Christianity at so cheap a rate as to make them equally worthless.

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 113.
[2] ib. p. 113.

Nor even when the historical estimate is restored to its proper place, is it enough merely to ' investigate the immediate causes of the death of Jesus.' For as the writer just quoted acknowledges, the questions must at once occur, ' Where does God come in ? Why was a crime of this sort ever permitted ? Why has the memory of it actually become a religious dogma ? Other people have been put to death quite as unjustly, and the results, though great, are not to be compared with those which have followed from the death of Jesus. Why is this ? ' But surely, when all is fairly considered, ' quite as unjustly ' is an unwarranted comparison. Even as it is untrue to say that ' Many a British soldier has died as brave a death as Jesus.' For the acknowledged fact that ' none have ever lived the life of Jesus ' should make such comparisons impossible. The outstanding reality remains, that such a life as His did end with such a death ; and that that death has had results such as can be attributed to no other event in all earth's history. In face of such a dire event, and its estimate in writings which are themselves alike unique, unmistakable in their emphasis, and apparently indestructible in their influence, it is no wonder that Christian teachers in every age have laid unmeasured stress upon the connected doctrine, and have ceaselessly sought to elucidate it to the uttermost.

3. 3. Some of their suggestions may now be said to be finally set aside. Theology is at best but a human science, and theologians, like other men of science, have often not only spoken strongly but made mistakes. Yet theology never claimed finality, any more than other branches of science. Each man did but con-

tribute his most earnest thought to the problems involved, and in the light of his own day. It is, therefore, quite open to us now both to appreciate the sincerity of the attempts of departed theologians, and to put away some of their results as no longer worthy of consideration. In this list of rejected views will come first that of Irenaeus and of Origen, which prevailed for nearly a thousand years, to the effect that through sin men belonged to Satan, and Christ was a ransom paid to Satan to set men free. No one holds such a notion to-day.

In spite of the influence of Athanasius and Augustine, the Origenian view was not displaced until the time of Anselm, who, in the eleventh century, taught a worthier conception, viz. that the ransom was due and was paid to God, and not to Satan. Indeed, 'by sin man had incurred a debt to God so great, that nothing short of the divine could possibly make sufficient compensation.' The influence of this theory was very great, and has perhaps never been wholly lost. But no one accepts it now in its original form.

Wyclif, in the fifteenth century, and the reformers in the sixteenth, modified the Anselmic doctrine by insisting that what was really due, and actually paid, to God was punishment. Christ so actually became the substitute for sinners, that He suffered the very punishment which otherwise they must have endured. Penal justice had no longer a claim against men, simply because Christ had actually taken their punishment. The Calvinistic Reformers, of course, added to this that He only died for the elect, and so only bore their

precise punishment. This view still lingers in a few cases in the Scotch Presbyterian or Baptist Churches. But from Christendom in general it is now finally dismissed.

Most of the other views which to-day tend to prevail, may be traced back to the opposition offered to Anselm by Abelard in the twelfth century. The extreme attitude adopted by the Socinians of the sixteenth century is perpetuated in modern Unitarianism. Their view would banish altogether the thought of any vicarious atonement, and insist that repentance alone is always sufficient in itself for reconciliation between man and God.

Before considering, however, the modifications of this plain though extreme position, which are now being recommended as 'the new theology,' it is necessary to clear the way still further by pointing out how misleading and mischievous are some popular notions that yet prevail. There can be little doubt that it is against these, rather than against the careful statement of the modern evangelical view, that the modern crusade is really directed. It will be here required to do little more than enumerate them. Most of them have virtually dropped out of thought, although in a few quarters traces still remain. They are all alike unscriptural, irrational, impossible. The following list is not exhaustive, but sufficient for the purpose.

(i) That Christ was an innocent victim compulsorily substituted for men, to appease the wrath of an angry God, and so reconcile Him to humanity.

This is, perhaps, the most commonly denounced conception. It is scorned in print, held up to ridicule

in public debate, contemned in private conversation. The unbeliever avows himself shocked, and the critic indignant, at the suggestion of such mingled injustice and cruelty on the part of the ideal Being. But it is all misdirected energy. If such objectors were but as fair as they are vehement, they would allow the New Testament to speak for itself against all popular phraseology. As soon as this is done, we find that there is no ground whatever to speak of cruelty, there is no appeasing, no compulsion.

The suggestion of cruelty involves caprice and passion. This is absolutely impossible in 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' to whom alone all Christian doctrine refers. The whole truth of the case is well put by one who can never be accused of favouring orthodoxy—viz. F. W. Robertson of Brighton[1]: 'Remember what law is. The moral laws of this universe are as immutable as God Himself. Law is the being of God. God cannot alter those laws, He cannot make wrong right. He cannot make truth falsehood, or falsehood truth. Law moves on its majestic course irresistible. If you resist a law of the universe in its eternal march, the universe crushes you, that is all. Consider what law is, and then the idea of bloody vengeance passes away altogether from the Scripture. It is not "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," in the sanguinary spirit of the old retaliatory legislation. It is the eternal impossibility of violating that law of the universe whereby penalty is affixed to transgression.' It is thus the holy, awful might of the moral law, which God Himself cannot annul because

[1] *Sermons*, i. 143.

He cannot contradict Himself, with which every wicked man has to reckon.

The notion of 'appeasing' is equally false. Never, anywhere, does the New Testament teach that Christ's death was necessary to make an angry and unforgiving God placable. No words in human language can possibly say more plainly than it does, that the whole mission of Christ is but the expression of the love of the Father, through the Eternal Spirit. The best-known verse in the Bible is herein oft least appreciated: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' Somehow, in popular reference, all the stress falls upon the latter clause instead of on the former. But when fairly heeded, the first five words here make unequivocally plain, whatever becomes of all theologies, that Christ's whole work, from beginning to end, proceeds from and embodies divine love. Nor, indeed, can it ever be too earnestly affirmed that the New Testament knows nothing of any wrath of God that is separable from the love of God. His anger is always and for ever nothing but the expression of His love, through law, in presence of evil. Moreover, according to Christ's revelation of the divine nature, love and law are eternal correlatives; the one is unthinkable without the other. 'All's love, and yet all's law,' for ever and ever.

But the resistlessness of the moral law never involved the least approach to personal compulsion, as applied to Christ. His own utterances are unmistakable. 'My life, no one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.' Whatever were the nature or extent of His sufferings, His own entire voluntariness

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and absolute concurrence in all that Gethsemane and Calvary involved, are beyond question. 'Thinkest thou that I could not even now pray to My Father, and He would immediately give Me more than twelve legions of angels; but how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled?'

It is, therefore, time indeed that this whole crude, and coarse, and false conception dropped for ever out of religious parlance.

(ii) That there was some rigid legal transaction, by means of which an exact equivalent for the sin of the world was extracted from Christ, in personal suffering. This was never anything more than the imagination of certain theologians.

(iii) That sin was an infinite wrong, which demanded an infinite satisfaction. This was but another well-meant conceit of theology. It sought to do justice to the divine by exaggerating the human, and to appreciate moral evil by measuring the immeasurable.

(iv) That Christ was punished instead of us, and so bore our sins that our guilt was transferred to Him. Even Dr. Martineau found here reason for regarding the Atonement as 'abhorrent.' Strange that so great and good a man, with the New Testament before him, should be so misled. Where does it teach that Christ was 'punished' instead of us? Assuredly, nowhere. Even if it were true that 'The popular kind of evangelical phraseology is that which continues to represent Jesus as having borne the punishment due to sin,'[1] it is

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 145. The courteous reviewer of the booklet on 'New Theology' by the present writer, remarks (in the *Christian Commonwealth*) that Dr. Dale defined

nothing to the point. For, of a truth, neither Christianity nor any philosophy whatever is to be fairly estimated by popular phraseology. 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him,' will occur to every one who accepts Isaiah liii. as pointing to Christ.[1] But without pressing for any special, critical meaning of the word 'chastisement' here, it may yet be employed as a convenient term for a differentiation which is most certainly Scriptural.[2] Punishment, to be punishment, implies personal guilt,—i.e. blameworthiness for wrong done. But Scripture never either asserts this in regard

Christ's sufferings as 'penal.' To which a double reply may be made. First, that Dr. Dale was too good a philosopher to intend to convey the meaning that Christ Himself was in any sense guilty. Secondly, that the appeal here is not to any theologians, however eminent, but to the sources whence they confessedly draw their conceptions.

[1] This, of course, most advocates of the new theology strenuously deny. But whatever hesitation there may be about the worth of the prophet's words as a prediction, there can be none concerning their marvellous applicability as a description. And unless, under the guise of criticism, we are to play fast and loose with the Gospels according to fancy, Christ's own words seal for ever His own acceptance of this description as divinely intended. 'For I say unto you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me' (Luke xxii. 37). Christian theology, at least, cannot be far wrong when it accepts Christ's own exegesis.

[2] Dr. Joseph Cook's words hereupon are worth recalling (Monday Lectures, *Orthodoxy*, p. 120, popular edition, Hodder): 'The definition of the Atonement is the substitution of the voluntary sacrificial chastisement of Christ for man's punishment. What is the definition of punishment? Pain inflicted for personal blameworthiness. What is chastisement? Pain suffered for the improvement of the one who suffers it, or for the benefit of those who witness it. Does the latter imply guilt? Not at all. I never was taught that Christ suffered punishment. I had to learn from books that any one made it an objection to Christianity that an innocent being was punished.'

to Christ, nor assumes that personal demerit can by any possibility be transferred from one person to another. Every passage which speaks strongly about Christ's bearing our sins, is emphatic also in the declaration that He was always, and in all that He did, Himself sinless. One example will serve for many. 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience,' &c.[1]

The word 'substitution,' which to so many minds constitutes the very rock of offence in the Christian doctrine, is not merely perfectly harmless, but, morally speaking, most of all true and attractive when fairly considered. All that is required is that the actual significance of sinfulness, as resulting from acts of sin, should be appreciated. Three elements are thus necessarily involved. (*a*) Personal blameworthiness, or guilt; (*b*) liability to suffer penalty for broken moral law; (*c*) indisposition, ever accumulating into inability, to keep that law in future without the help of 'a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness.'

But there never was, is, or can be, any substitution in regard to the first of these. The common cavil is utterly groundless. That which it so bitterly denounces has never been suggested, save in careless popular phrase. The liability to suffer penalty, alone, has on New Testament lines ever been pronounced transferable. But this is a plain and definite debt to the moral law, which may be as righteously discharged for us by another as a debt to civil law may be, granted a friend loving us sufficiently to pay it. This, and

[1] Heb. ix. 14.

this alone, is the true substitution contemplated by the doctrine of the Cross. Manifestly this, in the human case, could only be effected by transcendent love. But so far from being 'immoral' or 'unjust,' it is the highest exhibition at once of the most utter justice, the loftiest morality, and the greatest love conceivable.

(v) Another fallacy is that Christ died simply to save men from punishment hereafter, or in popular language, from 'going to hell.' It is confessedly rampant in many by no means obsolete hymns, and has been by reckless rant made sometimes so lurid and gruesome, as to drive far more thoughtful men into downright unbelief than thoughtless ones into emotional submission. It is none the less false to the real New Testament doctrine, as regards alike the highest purposes of God and the deepest needs of men.

(vi) That the aim and result of Christ's atonement is to make the sinner as if he had never sinned, is again another fallacy. It is, indeed, passing strange to find a highly esteemed teacher saying, a short time since, 'Your sin can be taken from you as though it had never been,'[1] and now declaring that 'All that love can do is to share to the uttermost in the painful consequences of sin, and by so doing break their power. What other atonement is needed than this? It requires no defence, and a child could understand it.'[2] For the former statement is as untrue as the latter is both misleading and self-contradictory. Never, under any circumstances, can sin be taken away

[1] *City Temple Sermons*, R. J. Campbell, p. 71.
[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 169.

as though it had not been. That would require that the sinner should be made innocent—a moral feat quite beyond omnipotence to accomplish. The sinner may be forgiven, welcomed home again by divine love, developed into a saint, but he can never be what he would have been if he had not sinned. As to sharing 'the painful consequences of sin,' this would constitute no atonement at all, in any sense, besides creating confusion as a suggestion, and altogether foreign to the New Testament representation. The 'painful consequences of sin' *must* be moral, and *may* be also physical. The latter Christ does not 'share' at all; the former He has taken away entirely. The actual guilt is truly and for ever irreversible and untransferable. But the sense of guilt, which is the painful part of the consequence, He is so far from sharing that there is nothing left to share. 'And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.' The mystery of love in the true atonement cannot restore innocence, but it treats the sinner as if he were innocent, which is quite another thing; and that in many and great respects.

(vii) A similar fallacy, once very common, was the notion of an actual transference of character from Christ to the sinner. It is still found in some hymns, and is excused on the ground of figurative language. But there is no real excuse for any such representation, seeing that it involves a downright moral self-contradiction. Transferred character is unthinkable. The criticism that 'imputed righteousness is imputed nonsense,' may be too harsh in expression, for it

unnecessarily crushes tender and sincere feelings.[1] Yet it must be owned to be true in substance. What has to be shown is, rather, that the very necessity of atonement arises out of the impossibility of transferring character. If God could have done that, then indeed the somewhat flippant question of 'the new theology' might well be asked: 'Why in the world should God require such a sacrifice before feeling Himself free to forgive His erring children?'[2] But forgiveness is verily not such a trifle as this query suggests. If it were, it would be correspondingly valueless and ineffective. Forgiveness which should cost neither God nor man anything, would be of no worth whatever towards a renewal of the sinful nature. Whereas the need of men, from the spiritual standpoint, is always double. (*a*) The removal of the incurred liability to suffer just penalty. (*b*) The effecting of this removal in such a way as both to preserve the condemnation of evil, and create anew sufficient motives to goodness for the future. These can never be

[1] One is sadly surprised to find so many instances of similar harshness in statements of *The New Theology*. Even Mr. Campbell's book (p. 124) says that 'an immense amount of pious nonsense has been spoken and written about our Lord's agony in Gethsemane. We have been told that in this dreadful hour the sorrow of Jesus bore no relation to His physical death, but was caused by His mysterious self-identification with all the sins of mankind, past, present and to come.' But is this in any degree 'nonsense'? It may be mistake; but it is at least reverent mistake. And such reverent mistake, even if the writer here were in a position to demonstrate it—which certainly he is not—can never be 'nonsense.' Many of us to-day are very far from being mystics, but to dismiss all such yearnings as merely nonsensical, would be rather secularist truculence than Christian instruction.

[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 117.

separated. Nor can any amount of new 'theological word-spinning'[1] lessen the significance of forgiveness in relation to guilt, any more than an older Calvinistic conception can make possible the creation of guiltless character by transference.

But it is the very essence of the true atonement to meet both these necessities. For that essence is the co-operation of perfect holiness and perfect love. The latter consents to be treated as guilty, though not guilty, for the really guilty one's sake; and so making his forgiveness possible, sets him free. The former prevents the ruin of moral law, and so effectually guards the future. The two combined supply measureless motive power to the forgiven one for a new life. What more could God Himself do for a moral being?[2]

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 126, where the writer says, concerning the death of Jesus, 'It was both simple and sublime. Theological word-spinning only serves to obscure its true significance.' But why should a careful statement of the older theology be any more 'word-spinning' than that of the newer?

[2] One could scarcely desire a clearer statement of this than in the words of Mr. Campbell a couple of years ago. 'The death of Christ is not an excuse for human sin; nay, it is God's verdict upon it. The eternal righteousness spake in the suffering of the innocent when Jesus died on Calvary, but it means that you were set free, as free as the best of human kind, and the blackest sinner may become the brightest saint. What my text tells you, is that He suffered *instead of you* and that is where the redemption consists' (*City Temple Sermons*, pp. 68, 72). But what does the same writer say now? That 'the belief that in some way or other the death of Jesus on Calvary actually effected something in the unseen by making God propitious towards us and removing the barrier which prevented Him from freely forgiving human sin' 'is not only not true, but it ought not to be true; it is a serious hindrance to spiritual religion.' 'Making God propitious' is, as above pointed out, a popular fallacy which ought not to be charged upon theology—but for the rest, the writer's own words yield sufficient reply.

If man be man and not thing, all that even the love of an omnipotent God can do towards making character, is to give him opportunity and stimulus, by personal appeal, to make it for himself.

(viii) It is, however, another popular fallacy to isolate the death of Christ from His preceding life and following resurrection. Dr. J. Wilson writes, in his thoughtful Hulsean Lectures, 'Let us say boldly that the Incarnation, that is the life and death of the Christ—for the life and death were equally necessary—is the identification of the human and the divine life. This identification is the Atonement. There is no other.' But such a statement seems, from any fair standpoint, to be at once incomplete and ambiguous. Even if at-one-ment really stands for reconciliation, the completest reconciliation can never amount to identification of the human with the divine. The main question, however, is overlooked, viz. as to how this reconciliation is to be brought about. And even when the same writer goes on to say that 'the atoning work of Christ has been from the first and ever will be, specially centred in His death on the cross,' we find still no reference to the great event that followed, in regard to which the apostle emphatically declared, 'If Christ be not raised then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain; ye are yet in your sins.'

This isolating tendency is unfortunately perpetuated in numberless hymns and sermons, where the death of Christ is emphasized to the uttermost but no mention whatever made of anything else. 'Said I not well in declaring that the Atonement is there, the whole

of Christianity? It is its beginning and its end.'[1] Such an utterance is as typical and well-meant as it is unwarranted. Thoughtful Christians have never really had any right to sing, be it even so tenderly—

> For ever here my rest shall be,
> Close to Thy bleeding side;
> This all my hope and all my plea,
> For me the Saviour died.

Not only, however, does the whole hymn from which this verse comes make no reference at all to the resurrection of Christ, but it is in this respect like very many more. Yet neither the desire to concentrate attention on the cross, nor the fear that it may be under-estimated, justifies the separation of the tragedy of Calvary from the preceding character which gives it such emphasis, or the following transcendent event which turned the tragedy into triumph. A voluntary death without a preceding life of perfect obedience, would be as unavailing for the great avowed purpose of saving men, as would be both the life and death that only issued in a martyr's memory, instead of a risen, living, Saviour to the uttermost.

(ix) Finally, it is a fallacy combining the theoretical with the practical, to think or assert that any one particular view of this great theme is necessary, in order to constitute a man a child of God or a genuine Christian. All damnatory clauses are here as utterly out of place as in the Athanasian creed. The only orthodoxy on which the New Testament insists is that every man should be 'fully convinced in his own

[1] *City Temple Sermons*, R. J. Campbell, p. 72.

mind.' Undoubtedly there is a true doctrine of the Atonement, and for it we should ceaselessly search. But no individual thinker, nor any section of the universal Church, will ever attain to a monopoly of the whole truth. The very same central reality, viewed from a myriad different standpoints, like a diamond with a myriad facets will yield as many differing flashes of light. Each may be true, but certainly not the whole truth. One man may sincerely think that he is doing justice to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement by saying that 'never either consciously or unconsciously will any one but a cur ask for the punishment to fall on some one else, nor rejoice if told that it already has so fallen.'[1] Whilst another, equally thoughtful, may find himself driven here to declare that 'There are some truths so big that you cannot state them until you use an hyperbole. It is as though you were to say, I am not guilty; the sinless One is. Why don't I explain it? I cannot; nobody can.'[2] It is strange, confessedly, to find this latter writer now offering to explain everything in the following simple terms: 'The immediate effect of the life and death of Jesus upon His followers was to make them more or less like Him. This love-force of theirs, this intense loyalty to Jesus, was and still is the redeeming thing in the life of mankind. There is not, and never has been, any other Atonement.'[3] Even if the self-contradiction be overlooked, to some of us that appears to be no atonement at all, nor even a

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge, *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1904, p. 466.
[2] *City Temple Sermons*, p. 71.
[3] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 167.

true account of the way of reconciliation between man and God. Yet we are quite willing to accept the test of value suggested by our friend when, in expressing his former view, that 'the eternal righteousness spake in the suffering of the innocent when Jesus died on Calvary, but it means that you were set free,'[1] he adds 'It would be impossible to exaggerate the moral value of that gospel; and that cannot be untrue which has such moral results. There are some men who would remain bad all their lives if they were not assured of some such emancipation as this.' Yes; this is certainly true, as myriads could testify. For which reason, when 'the new theology' tells us that 'The Atonement is in its essence, not something Christ has done instead of us, but something which, if we are willing, He may do in us'[2] we are bound to reply that rather it is both, and that really the first half which the writer reverently puts away from him as untrue, is not only true in itself, but is the very reason and dynamic of the second half. 'Salvation is not an event but a process.' But why not both? Surely without the event of birth the process of childhood could never take place. It would seem truer, therefore, to regard the event as the necessary beginning of the process, and the process as the equally necessary

[1] *City Temple Sermons*, p. 72.

[2] *The New Evangel*, by Dr. Warschauer (Jas. Clarke), p. 158. For sweet reasonableness and thoughtful moderation of statement, as well as for genuine spiritual tone, this seems to me by far the best presentation of the new theology in short compass. It is quite free from acerbity, and even if one cannot accept all the writer's positions, one cannot but be glad that such a statement of the case should just now be issued.

result of the event. The event within is, then, the appreciation of what Christ in His death has done for us; just as the ensuing process is the embodiment of what He through His resurrection is able to do in us.

All these differences of theological conception are, however, perfectly compatible with true discipleship. Mere intellectual accuracy never yet brought any man nearer God, for 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.' Yet is the love of the truth, for the truth's sake, ever incumbent upon every man, and especially upon the Christian. Moreover the presumption cannot but hold good that the nearer we get to the true understanding of the whole mission of Christ, historically, psychologically, theologically, the more it should be possible, for individuals and Churches alike, to realize His intention and bring to pass the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

4. Thus it becomes increasingly necessary to watch the sources whence popular fallacies, with their mischievous tendencies, arise. It can never be either wise or true to lump together all modern thought as necessarily unworthy, and inimical to Christianity. Much of its revolt from the doctrine here considered, has been due to the thoughtlessness of earnest preachers who have substituted vehemence for reasoning, and 'red-hot' speech for clear statement. Beyond doubt some things said in orthodox pulpits, or shouted across the street in outdoor services, have played into the hands of unbelievers, and disgusted men of honest perception. Emotion without regard for truth is madness, in religion as really as in aught else. The

Kingdom of Heaven that rests on holy love, does not need the help of inflated sentimentalism.

Religious poetry, too, has a great deal to answer for. There is scarcely a hymn-book in Christendom that does not need revision herein, even when all allowance has been made for the necessities of rhythm and hyperbole. The dreadful iteration and reiteration of ' blood,' ' blood,' ' blood,' is sometimes enough to shock any heart and repulse any mind in days when, whether it be gain or loss, men's natures are necessarily far more sensitive than when mental training was almost nil, and surgery consisted in putting the stump of an amputated limb into a tar-barrel. The most earnest missions may be effectively conducted without sensuous and exaggerated realism.

The same applies to the hyper-anthropomorphism of much religious thought and speech. The term may be long, but the thing is only too plain. The lamentable absence of reverence sometimes almost encourages the suggestion that the ' wrath of God ' is merely the magnification of the passion and spite of men. So too the ' love of God ' becomes not seldom little more than the representation on a larger scale of our own feelings. This superficiality in the Churches finds sadly real counterpart outside, in the shallow demand for a gospel that shall have no difficulties, and a doctrine of Atonement devoid of all mystery. Yet even in our little human hearts, love and sorrow continually transcend definition by reason of their unfathomable reality. How much less reasonable is it to insist upon transparent simplicity, in the highest as well as deepest verities that relate to God and man ? A very little

rational humility would nip in the bud not a few 'difficulties' of evangelical belief.

That the tendency to diminish the estimate of sin's sinfulness also leads to questions concerning the doctrine of Atonement, can scarcely be denied by any thoughtful observer of the modern atmosphere. Here all that need be said, and always in careful charity, is that it is only too easy for human selfishness and passion to make light of its own wickedness, and either with false logic argue the easiness of forgiveness, or swallow the comforting anodyne of irresponsibility so ostentatiously offered by modern 'Determinism.' A flagrant instance of the mutual contradiction between recent currents of thought here presents itself. For whilst 'Determinists' call up the shade of Omar Khayyam to endorse a fatalism which mocks at the bare possibility of sin, Theosophists insist upon a Karmic law through which all forgiveness of real sin is absolutely impossible. Meanwhile, others are asserting with equal energy, in the name of religion, that forgiveness is the simplest of all moral proceedings, and needs but the unconditioned will of a supreme Being to put everything straight. These vagaries may be left to answer each other. Yet all the more necessary becomes the task of the thoughtful Christian teacher as he endeavours to set forth the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, to those who look to him for guidance.

It is a wild assertion on the part of the newest theology that 'Modern evangelical thought has done very little with all these past theories except to make them impossible; it has no consistent and reasonable expla-

nation to put in their place.'[1] At most this means that the writer does not accept what evangelical theologians have taught. But that their views are necessarily less reasonable than his own, assuredly does not follow. The thoughtful volume, for instance, of Dr. W. N. Clarke, not to mention many more,[2] is quite as able, sincere, and reasonable, as anything produced either by opponents or critics of evangelical faith. Nothing is easier, and often nothing falser, than an epigram. To sum up the situation by saying that the doctrine of the Atonement is 'an unethical superstructure supported by an unhistorical foundation,' is merely a rationalistic echo of the Papal assumption of infallibility, and with quite as little warrant. The summary which here follows is confessedly no more than another attempt to state positively the outline of Christian doctrine, on evangelical lines. But it is not necessarily unethical, unhistorical, unreasonable, because the latest reviewer or newest theologian does not endorse each suggested step. Assuming the substantial reliability of the New Testament, and the fact of sin in human nature as already outlined, we may venture, therefore, upon these suggestions towards a true doctrine of the cross of Jesus Christ.

(1) Christ's death was no more an ordinary murder, than His life was an ordinary life. This latter will not be gainsaid. We have already noted the assertion that 'Many a British soldier has died as brave a death

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 145.

[2] Such as *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement*, by J. Scott Lidgett, *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, by Dr. Denney, *The Christian Faith*, by O. A. Curtis, &c., &c.

as Jesus, but none have ever lived the life of Jesus.'[1] The first clause here is more than any thoughtful writer is warranted in asserting. The second is not only true but immeasurably true. Does it actually include and intend the Incarnation of the Son of God, or not? Upon the answer to that turns the truth or falsity of these further assertions. 'The typical theologian never seems to think of looking at the death of Jesus from the purely human point of view; and yet surely this is the only legitimate thing to do when trying to get at the heart of the subject.' That is to say, the only way to explain Gethsemane, is to approach it from the 'purely human' point of view.[2] But such an 'only' way simply begs the very 'heart of the subject' before approaching it. Even Rousseau might teach us better than this. 'Yes! if the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God.'[3] To insist that the Cross of Jesus shall be viewed only from 'the purely human point of view,' may be new but is not true theology, because it does not face all the facts of the case. It is precisely *not* a merely ordinary human immolation that we are regarding. For the world has only had one Jesus, and will never have another.

(2) In the dying of Jesus there was something manifestly, mysteriously, immeasurably, more than in any martyr's death. After such a life, and for such a character as His, it is inconceivable that the mere

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 123.
[2] ib., pp. 116, 124.
[3] *Emile*, IV., vol. ii., p. 111.

fear of death should have caused the anguish which He both anticipated and experienced.[1] The suggestion that it meant less bravery than the Pompeian soldier showed, is revolting. No martyr ever uttered His cry of agony.[2]

(3) Whatever the death of Jesus meant, to Him, of mental anguish and agony of soul, it was all absolutely voluntary on His part. He could have escaped it with a word [3] had He so willed.

(4) Yet the Christian records give an unequivocal answer to the questions recently repeated—'But is this all that can be said about the matter? Where does God come in? Why was a crime of this sort ever permitted?'[4] Peter's words will best suffice for answer. 'Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay.'[5] To which may be added another word from the Sufferer Himself. 'He that sent Me is with Me; He hath not left Me

[1] Luke xii. 50; xxii. 44.

[2] Matt. xxvii. 46. To characterize the many reverent attempts to appreciate this, as 'an immense amount of pious nonsense,' is, one must repeat, as unwarranted as unworthy. 'Which things angels desire to look into,' is far nearer rather the Christian estimate.

[3] Matt. xxvi. 53; John x. 18. Professor Seeley's noble comment upon this is perhaps the best in our language: 'And when His enemies grew fierce He continued still to endure their attacks in silence, until, petrified and bewildered with astonishment, men saw Him arrested and put to death with torture, refusing steadfastly to use in His own behalf the power He conceived He held for the benefit of others. It was the combination of greatness and self-sacrifice which won their hearts, the mighty powers held under a mighty control, the unspeakable condescension, the Cross of Christ' (*Ecce Homo*, 1903 edition, p. 55).

[4] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 121.

[5] Acts ii. 23.

alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.'[1] And the only conclusion possible, so long as these utterances merit regard, is the identification of the Father with the Son in the whole dark final tragedy, no less than in the preceding communion of a sinless life. This shows why, in the well-worn words of John iii. 16, the supreme stress comes to be put rightly upon the beginning: 'God'—the Father—'*so loved* the world.' Of which the truth that then follows is but a solemn echo.

(5) Thus the true doctrine of the Cross exhibits God Himself, in the totality of His nature, as suffering on behalf of men. Christ was the incarnation of the divine anguish over the sinfulness of humanity. As the lightning-flash reveals the reality of the environing though invisible electricity, so may the vivid anguish of the divine-human sufferer truly be regarded as the revelation of the generally ignored love of the Triune God for guilty men. Triunity, indeed, in the gospel record, would have been an anachronism. But from our standpoint, with the Christian records in our hands, and the whole fact of Christ and His career before our eyes, together with the ensuing Christian philosophy under the guidance of the Spirit, anything else would be less than the truth. That the whole truth should here be transcendental, is only reasonable, in face of all the facts. It were unreasonable to demand exhaustive explanation, for we can never obtain that even for the simplest life or the humblest consciousness. The phrase becomes, therefore, as rational as religious, —'the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit

[1] John viii. 29.

offered Himself without blemish unto God.' Sceptic vandalism, we know, can easily trample upon it. But so can the heel of a savage upon a costly tube of radium —and what would such a proceeding prove?

(6) Christ's own marked anticipation of His death shows that He regarded it as something more than the inevitable result of His attitude towards the religious and political environment. He always refers to it as of immeasurable importance for the fulfilling of His mission. So long as the Gospels count for anything, it can never be sufficient to say that 'In such a time as that in which Jesus lived, such a life as His was sure to end on a Calvary of some kind, unless He ran away from it, or God supernaturally intervened to save Him. Neither event happened.'[1] If that were all, then such a death would also prove the greatest hindrance, if not utter nemesis of His work. But He Himself describes its effect as exactly the opposite. 'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself. This He said signifying by what manner of death He would die.' Is it credible that all He really meant by such avowals, was that the moral lustre of His own life must be followed by the moral beauty of self-devotion on the part of His followers? Some may think so. Others cannot. Of course if the Bible be cast to the winds as unimportant, there is no more to say. But until then, the total witness of our Christian records seems as much weightier as clearer than the foregoing estimate. 'O dull-witted men, He replied, with minds so slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was there not a

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 122.

necessity for the Christ thus to suffer, and then enter into His glory ? '[1]

(7) All the other writers of the New Testament corroborate this 'necessity,' and at the same time regard Christ's death as the uttermost expression of unspeakable love upon His part. However much they may differ in their way of saying this, 'the principal thing they have in common,' we are told, is 'their belief that the death of Jesus was of vital efficacy in the doing away of sin.'[2] Well, 'vital efficacy' is surely much more than a mere wail of disappointment at the end of Christ's work, because He did not run away from it and God did not intervene. It is the presence or the absence of this 'vital efficacy' which makes all the difference between atonement and at-one-ment. At least, according to the whole New

[1] Luke xxiv. 25–27, Weymouth's Translation.

[2] 'Many exegetes,' says Mr. Campbell, 'have undertaken to show that the various writers of the New Testament held one and the same theory of the relation of the death of Jesus to the forgiveness of sins; never was a task more hopeless. The Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine theories and that of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews are not mutually consistent, and Paul is not always consistent with himself.' Our friend must really allow us to form our own estimate as to whether there be such hopelessness in seeking and finding substantial unity in the New Testament hereupon. But one must venture to point out, with all tender respect, that Paul is certainly more consistent with himself than his critic is. To say from the same pulpit one year, 'Christ suffered instead of you, and that is where the redemption consists' (*City Temple Sermons*, p 68), and shortly after, 'What has the death of Jesus effected in the unseen so as to make it possible for God to forgive us ? Nothing whatever, and nothing was ever needed' (*New Theology*, p. 175) seems to most of us far more real inconsistency than can be found between Paul's earliest and latest writings, or any other portions of the New Testament, in this regard.

Testament, Christ did *not* merely die in order to create an influence through which God and men should be at one. He died so to atone for human sin as to remove that which prevented God and man from being at one. Furthermore, all those who first preached 'Christ crucified,' unhesitatingly acknowledged and emphasized the guilt as well as the power of sin.

(8) The first manifestation of divine love in connexion with the death of Jesus, was undoubtedly in the fact that those responsible for His murder were not, then and there, punished as such a crime deserved. All wilful murder, sane morality will agree, merits punishment, whether capital or otherwise. But this was, of a truth, no ordinary murder. Even the newest theology says that 'the men who took part in it were guilty of what has proved to be the blackest deed in history.'[1] In what they did we have a fearful object-lesson as to the extent to which sin in human nature can prevail, and the consequent guiltiness that can be incurred. But in the fact that dire punishment did not at once justly fall upon such murderers, we cannot but mark also a transcendent exhibition of divine forbearance.

(9) But all sin is voluntary, however it may differ in degree. The act of the worst is but typical and truly representative of the attitude of all wrongdoers, both before and after the crucifixion of Jesus. Sin is essentially and necessarily qualitative, not quantitative. Even in the eyes of civil law, the question concerning any accused is always whether at all, rather than by how much, the law has been broken. So in the light

[1] *The New Theology*, p. 121, R. J. Campbell.

of the moral law, every actual sinner is essentially one with the murderers of Jesus Christ.

(10) But if men are continually sinners, and nothing penal ever happens, what must become of the worth, the might, the majesty of moral law? It would in such case become utterly null and void; just as actually as the law of the land, if any citizen could without any penalty help himself at all times to his neighbour's property. That, however, is inconceivable so long as we believe in God at all. Moral law in and for men is but the expression of His character. Whilst He endures, it cannot be broken with impunity, for He cannot contradict Himself. Nor can He, consistently with His own nature, suffer the universe to drift into moral chaos. Hence, if there has been sin, as already defined, two consequences must ensue. (i) Guilt for the sin must rest on the actual sinner, and on him alone, whoever he be, or whatever the nature of his wrong-doing. (ii) Somehow, somewhere, there must be demonstration and acknowledgement, by suffering, that moral law cannot be broken without painful consequence. Such pain is not merely deterrent but retributive. And the essence of the retribution is a tribute to the majesty of right as inalienably divine.

But it is not absolutely necessary that such recognition of the solemnity of right should come from the wrongdoer, if there can be found another able and willing to make it for him. This is exactly where the words of the apostle Paul become so appropriate. 'For already, while we were still helpless, Christ at the right moment died for the ungodly. Why, it is scarcely conceivable that any one would die for

a simply just man; although for a good and lovable man, perhaps some one here and there will have the courage even to lay down his life. But God gives proof of His love to us in Christ's dying for us, while we were still sinners.' [1] And this is plainly synonymous with the expression above quoted from the City Temple pulpit: 'What my text tells you is that He suffered instead of you, and that is where the redemption consists.' [2]

Wherein? So far as reverent diffidence permits attempted expression, thus. In Christ's death there were manifestly three elements. Voluntariness, for He need not have suffered anything; innocence, so that He ought not to have suffered; inexplicable anguish of soul, which showed that something far worse than mere physical pain was resting on Him. These three fulfil all the conditions of the case. It is tragically manifest that the suffering inseparable from wrongdoing, in a moral universe, was immeasurably known to Him, and constituted the awful recognition of the solemnity of right. His own sinlessness left Him free to suffer this for others, because no such suffering

[1] Rom. v. 6–8, Weymouth's Translation.

[2] *City Temple Sermons*, p. 68. It is greatly to be regretted that the same writer can now permit himself to write thus: 'When an adherent of the so-called orthodox view of the doctrine of the Atonement is pressed to say just what he supposes the death of Jesus to have effected in the mind of God, so as to free humanity from its curse, he usually takes refuge in phrases about the mystery of the cross, and so on. He does not say in plain language exactly what he means, for the truth is, he does not know.' Yet this author's own previous expression is (*City Temple Sermons*, p. 71), 'The gospel that we have to preach is the declaration of Christ's power of so dealing with your sin that it is His, and not yours. Why don't I explain it? I cannot; nobody can.'

was due for or from Himself. His voluntariness was not only the expression of love for men on His own part, but, if His words of distinct affirmation are at all to be trusted, the obedient recognition and incarnation of the purpose of the love of God. His whole offering of Himself to suffer for men was thus the self-sacrificing co-operation of the Divine Son with the loving will of the Father of humanity and moral Ruler of the universe.

There is, therefore, no need to ask whether He suffered 'on our behalf' or 'instead of' us, for it was certainly both. Yet we cannot but see how very far from the truth are many of the professed representations of evangelical doctrine. Here is one of the mildest. 'One still very frequently hears expositions of this doctrine which give one the impression of a wrathful God, whose anger has to be appeased by the sufferings of some victim, an innocent one serving just as well as the supposedly guilty party. We feel that such a conception is dishonouring to God.'[1] Certainly it is. But evangelical doctrine is no more responsible for it than the 'new theology' is for some of the wild things that are said under its name. How untrue is every clause in this supposed description, the above may sufficiently show. All doctrine may, of course, be carelessly preached by thoughtless advocates. But what is wanted in such case is not the construction of a new theology, but the doing of justice to the old.

(11) This tragic and tremendous redemption through suffering has to come in whenever reconciliation with God, i.e. with the law of holy right, is thought about.

[1] *The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 146.

In other words, the guilt of sin is far too real and too great to be easily and completely dissolved away by mere repentance. For repentance, at its utmost, does not really touch the past at all. Its sorrow is as helpless as it may be real. It may face the future with resolve, but it can never lessen the past by undoing. It is quite unavailing for advocates of the newest theology to be always pouring scorn upon 'legal' or 'forensic' notions here. For they are most worthily, as well as actually, in place. The love which does not involve law is mere vapid sentiment. And all law enacted for high purposes, even between man and man, must and does insist that a promise not to break it again, is no sufficient recognition whatever of the fact that it has actually been set at nought in the past.

(12) It is to such recognition of the seriousness of wrongdoing, however variously conceived, that not only all the Jewish sacrifices but the whole system of bloody sacrifices with which the mythologies of other nations are permeated, surely points. The story of *The Golden Bough* is gruesome enough, by all confession. But in days when at every street corner the notion is paraded that no man is responsible for anything he says or does,[1] it would seem to be a timely even if dreadful testimony to the inviolable reality of moral law in the evolution of humanity. It is correspondingly natural that wherever Christ is known as having 'offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,'—all other sacrifices cease. Those who believe on Him come to see as never before, both that 'it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin,' and

[1] See *Guilty*, in reply to Mr. R. Blatchford's *Not Guilty*, passim.

also that in very deed He is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'

(13) That which the whole gospel, according to the New Testament, urges upon all men as the 'way of salvation' from the guilt of sin, is equally possible and effectual for all. The individual man, conscious of his responsibility for wrong done, i.e. of his sin, can, if he will, so unite himself to Christ by an act of faith —which is really the expression of the deliberate spontaneous choice of his whole moral nature—that in becoming one with Christ he is freed from the liability to penalty, and the door is open for his full-hearted reconciliation with God, all holy, as his Father. No language of modern theology can express this better than Paul's: 'Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.' [1]

(14) Here, finally, is the real dynamic whereby in human nature also the power of sin is met, and matched, and overcome. Let us state this in the words of an avowed teacher of the newest theology. It can hardly be put into better words.

'Nothing is more certain than that Jesus lived and died to save sinners; nothing is more certain than that the motive which impelled Him so to live and die was the force of love. He, the sinless One, loved the sinner so much, that He was willing to endure shame and agony for the sake of the redemption of transgressors. And while we have rejected the notion of vicarious punishment, yet there is the vicarious suffering of the

[1] Col. ii. 14.

godly for the ungodly, of the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, of Christ for us men. In Him, God appeals to us as never before; and among all the motives that bring about conversion from sin to a godly, righteous, and sober life, none is so powerful as that which is summed up in the conviction "He loved me and gave Himself for me." '[1]

The only note that the old theology needs to make on such a true and forceful statement is, that 'vicarious suffering' is never so vicarious as when it is endured not only on behalf of another—as with a mother when a child is born—but when it is borne instead of another, —as when in the *Tale of Two Cities*, Sydney Carton sends Darnay forth free to his waiting loved ones, whilst he himself remains in the condemned cell, and finally goes as his substitute to the guillotine. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Mr. Campbell is right here: 'He suffered instead of you,' *is* the essence of redemption.

Is it any wonder that the character-moulding effects of such a belief should be mighty? They may be associated with ignorance, with mistaken conceptions, even with coarseness of language and imagery. But let only the reality of the vicariousness, the actuality

[1] *The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 159. If only all utterances upon the new and old theology were of the character of this excellent little book, nothing but Christian good could come from the present movement of religious thought. In all the instances in which I am compelled to differ with the writer, I am most glad to emphasize the courtesy, moderation, and fairness, with which his positions are stated. The tone of the whole work is truly that of an 'evangel.'

of such suffering on the part of such a Sufferer, for such a purpose, and with such a motive, come really home to the human heart, and the very least that can happen is the greatest possible influence for the best upon a moral being. History, observation, experience, all alike confirm this. To say that in regard to the mystery of the Cross an adherent of evangelical faith 'only believes what he has been told, and has persuaded himself that it is of the utmost value to Christian experience; which it is not, and never was'[1]—is a recklessly superficial and altogether untrue, not to say uncharitable, statement. If merely intended as a protest against popular sensationalism, it should be very differently expressed. Dr. Warschauer has much more truly said: 'that some one *immeasurably better* than ourselves should for our sakes undergo *some hardship*, must always impress us by its very unexpectedness. We did not think quite candidly that we were worth it. This is one lesson—not the whole, but full of significance—which we learn from Calvary, viz. the value of the human soul for which *such a sacrifice* was made.'[2] Surely the actual difference here between

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 117. Happily other and more reverent representations issue from the same school. 'While the whole ministry of our Lord was one long self-offering of love on behalf of sinners, the Christian consciousness throughout the ages has followed an unerring instinct in fixing upon the death of the Holy One as of altogether supreme significance. Without being able to talk learnedly about it, men have felt in every generation that the greatness of the sacrifice was the measure of sinfulness; that was no trivial matter which called forth Calvary' (*The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 161). The whole chapter merits careful perusal from all who wish to appreciate what is best in the attitude assumed.

[2] *The New Evangel*, p. 159.

the old and the 'new' theology, is, that the words of the latter here italicized,[1] are by the former so emphasized that their significance could only be approximately expressed in printed capitals. The only rivalry, therefore, which should exist between them is as to which can produce the greatest number of characters most truly justifying such an estimate.

This we do know, that, speaking generally, wherever the true appreciation of the Cross of Christ has prevailed, not only have living sacrifices ceased, but at the same time—strange paradox—the sense of sin has been intensified as never before. The initial effect of Calvary cannot be better described than in Professor Seeley's words. 'Witnessing His sufferings, and convinced by the miracles they saw Him work that they were voluntarily endured, men's hearts were touched, and pity for weakness blending strangely with wondering admiration of unlimited power, an agitation of gratitude, sympathy, and astonishment, such as nothing else could ever excite, sprang up in them; and when, turning from His deeds to His words they found this very self-denial which had guided His own life prescribed as the principle which should guide theirs, gratitude broke forth in joyful obedience, self-denial produced self-denial, and the law and Lawgiver together were enshrined in their inmost heart for inseparable veneration.'[2]

And do we not know, with equal certainty, that if only in our own day—whether accepting the new theology or the old—men saw enough in the Cross of

[1] By the present writer.

[2] *Ecce Homo*, 1903 edition, p. 58.

Christ to lead them for love's sake to obey Him, the whole reeking mass of greed, and lust, and drink, and selfishness, in all the myriad forms which curse humanity, would be cast into the depths of a sea of shame and penitence?

Assuredly never has greater untruth been put into human speech, than when it has been asserted that the doctrine of the Cross, as evangelically taught, 'tends to spiritual lethargy, if not immorality.' On the contrary, every man and woman knows, aye, every child, every Church, every nation knows, that when we would commit our sins we must turn away from Calvary. No Judas ever faced the Cross with his treachery. No Magdalene ever came there until she had at least desired to forsake her sin. Moths and bats, reptiles and beasts of prey, do not shrink from the light of day nearly as much as the pride and frivolity and selfishness and cruelty of humankind recoil from the purity and majesty and love that radiate from that Sufferer's face. And to-day's whole failure in the Churches, be it less or more, comes to pass because we ever make not too much, but far too little, in earnestness of mind and sincerity of heart, of the true significance of the death of Jesus Christ. Julian, the Emperor styled 'Apostate,' who vainly tried to revive Paganism against Christianity, is credited with the dying exclamation 'O Galilean, Thou hast conquered.' But it is only a fiction. Tradition has merely voiced what the Christian heart felt ought to have been. So would it be pitiful fiction to-day to pretend that the Cross of Christ has 'conquered' civilization. Yet in face of all the facts, estimated in the

light of truthful doctrine, Christian hymnology has truly expressed what ought to be, wherever He who hung on it is known :—

> Nay, but I yield, I yield,
> I can hold out no more ;
> I sink, by dying love compelled,
> And own Thee conqueror.

When that which ought to be comes thus to pass, the Kingdom of Heaven will verily be 'at hand.' And in that Kingdom there will be no more room for social problems than for individual crimes. But when —when will it be here ? How, we are driven to ask in face of the tragic problems of our day, can its arrival be hastened ?

Truly not by wild words about a 'false emphasis on sin,' which make man's relation to God a trifle compared with his relation to his fellows. Nor yet by dissecting out of the meaning of the cross of Christ the very heart of its self-sacrificing love.

It is not theology but fact which so vividly declares humanity's greatest need to be a Saviour, much more than a Teacher, or even an Example. What is necessary to constitute such a Saviour, is best put in the beloved disciple's deep and solemn words—'*He is an atoning sacrifice for our sins. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*[1] It is the true appreciation of that blended awfulness and tenderness, which would do more than anything else to bring to pass the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

[1] 1 John ii. 2 (Weymouth).

IV

INCARNATION—THE DEITY OF CHRIST

'What can you possibly have to reckon with except that all-pervading presence represented and summed up in the name of Jesus? I mean this statement, too, every word. I do not mean merely that Jesus illustrates the universe; He is the universe. He does not merely reveal the Infinite; He is the Infinite.'

R. J. CAMPBELL, *New Theology Sermons*, p. 60.

'Jesus the Christ is greater than our greatest thoughts of Him. In His perfect humanity He has revealed God to us, for He has translated the divine who dwells in the light unapproachable, out of the terms of the Absolute which for us "passeth man's understanding," into terms of human life. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us—full of grace and truth."'

R. W. SEAVER, *To Christ through Criticism*, p. 206.

IV

INCARNATION—THE DEITY OF CHRIST

'So they asked Him, You—who are you?'—JOHN viii. 25.

'Every spirit which acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come as man is from God, and no spirit is from God which does not acknowledge this about Jesus.'—1 JOHN iv. 2 (Weymouth).

OF all the questions ever propounded in the name of religion, none has been so crucial, or is so fraught with significance for humanity, as that recorded above. 'Who is Christ?' has echoed from human minds and hearts, age after age, and it comes to us to-day with greater point and weight than ever. The theologies which have grown up around it, and the libraries of literature written on their behalf, have left the great inquiry still an open question, so that not only are there vast cleavages in human opinion, but every thoughtful man is still thrown back upon his own conscientious judgement for a personal answer. In our own time, the question 'Who is Christ?' has become more pressing, more crucial, than ever. The vast increase of modern knowledge has, in regard to all subjects alike, inevitably created an atmosphere of inquiry and unrest. In religion more especially, doctrines which our fathers deemed settled for ever, are now ruthlessly dissected. In some cases the foun-

dations which were regarded as true beyond inquiry, are challenged to the uttermost. Whilst even concerning the nature as well as the mission of Jesus, recent attempts to formulate a 'new theology' have certainly suggested changes in Christian conception which can only be called startling, if not revolutionary.

So solemn and indeed tremendous an issue can no longer be decided by mere appeal to proof-texts. The area of discussion has been so much extended, and the ground of believing confidence so seriously challenged, that nothing short of a thorough-going induction from all sources will suffice. Nothing which is true and relevant can wisely be left out of account. In dealing with the modern world it is not enough to appeal to revelation. Christian claims and beliefs must also be submitted to the test of reason. Thus the attempt to formulate even an outline of all that is involved in the great question here mentioned, may seem presumptuous; but it may be permitted in the interests of truth, and for the sake of the many who have neither capacity nor time for prolonged study.

Two remarks will serve for sufficient introduction. First, it is by the doctrine of the person of Christ that Christianity stands or falls. The succinct statement that 'Christianity is Christ,' like all epigrams, is open to misconception. But it does express in condensed form the unmistakable truth that essential Christianity consists always and everywhere in a personal relationship, and not in the intellectual acceptance of a creed or the perfunctory discharge of formularies. The personality of Jesus may be truly said to bear an even closer relation to Christianity than the heart does to the

living human body. It is the source and sustenance of all else. Hence it becomes of unspeakable importance that here, if anywhere, in the whole realm of religion, we should think clearly and cherish sincerity in search of the truth.

Secondly, it does not follow that the one final and sufficient test of the truth, in this vast theme, is simplicity. Simplicity in daily life, as to food and habits, is greatly to be commended. But simplicity in physiology is absurd. The appreciation of the function of the heart in the human body, let alone the construction of a theory concerning its rhythmic activities, demands the fullest recognition and closest scrutiny of many complexities. So in the history of the doctrine of Christ's person, all the forms of belief which the Church has pronounced heresies, have been well-meant though futile attempts at simplification. Gnosticism, Sabellianism, Arianism, and the rest, down to Unitarianism and the newest theology, have all been actuated by the desire, rebuked in Augustine's dream, to make divine matters perfectly simple to human apprehension. Yet any one of average intelligence can see that in the present case it cannot possibly be done, without begging the very question which most of all demands consideration. Was Jesus merely human, or more than human? That is the eternal query. And although human nature is immeasurably far from being a simplicity, it would confessedly simplify all our thought of Him if He were, in every respect and altogether, only such as we really, even if superficially, know ourselves to be.

Putting aside, therefore, any prejudicial assumption that simplicity herein must be the test of true

theology, and recognizing that 'the direct love of Christ,' to quote the late Prof. Seeley's words,[1] constitutes the very essence of Christianity, let us endeavour, as clearly as succinctly, to state what is of faith herein.

We shall best do so under half a dozen definite lines of thought. The historicity of Jesus in general; the reliability of the portraiture of Him in the Gospels; the contents of that portraiture; its relation to modern criticism; its adaptation to human need; the suggestions of the 'new theology,'—these main topics will best enable us to put the Christian case into the reader's hands for his own personal decision.

(1) The Historicity of Jesus

To most of those who deem the present theme worthy of consideration, it will never occur to ask such a question as—Did Jesus Christ ever exist? But as it is necessary in these days to face everything, we have to note the fact that attempts are occasionally made to popularize the extreme 'position of the still small minority who are satisfied of the non-historicity of the Gospel of Jesus.'[2] They do not produce much effect, nor are likely to do. The position is indeed so desperate that we may dismiss it with a brief remark.

[1] 'Certainly the direct love of Christ as it was felt by His first followers is a rare thing among modern Christians. That is wanting for the most part Christ held to be all in all—spontaneous warmth, free and generous devotion' (*Ecce Homo*, p. 191, 1903 edition).

[2] This is the expression of the best-known advocate—from a scholarly point of view—of such notions in this country—Mr. J. M.

Dr. Schmiedel has given ample occasion for being regarded as an extreme critic. By the writer, however, just mentioned, who has done most in English towards attempting a disproof of the historic reality of Jesus Christ, he is said to be one 'who really understands the nature of an argument, and who has signalized himself in the theological world by attempting honestly and ably to put the thesis of the historicity of Jesus on a scientific basis.' This is an unimpeachable guarantee. What, then, does this same Dr. Schmiedel say hereupon? His latest words[1] are these: 'In a word, I know, on the one hand, that His person cannot be referred to the region of myth; on the other hand that He was man in the full sense of the term, and that, without of course denying that the divine character was in Him. This could only be found in the shape in which it can be found in any human being.' With the latter portion of this estimate we shall be concerned presently. For the moment this will suffice, as a sufficient warrant for dismissing as unworthy of further attention such a drastic method of getting rid of Christianity.[2]

Robertson, in the *Agnostic Annual* for 1907, p. 70. It is merely an echo of such writings, when the author of *God and my Neighbour* says: 'I cannot believe in the existence of Jesus Christ, nor Buddha, nor Moses. I believe that these are ideal characters constructed from still more ancient legends and traditions' (p. 9).

[1] See his booklet, *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 24.

[2] A more elaborate statement by Dr. Schmiedel, with a confirmatory chapter by Dr. Arno Neumann, will be found in the latter's little volume entitled *Jesus*, published by A. and C. Black. When such critics agree that we are 'justified in regarding the existence of Jesus as historically established,' the ordinary student may be well content to regard the question as settled.

(2) The Reliability of the Portraiture of the Gospels

It is here that the real difficulty for students occurs, though the average adherent of the Churches is little troubled by it. If we might still proceed, as our fathers did, to quote and appeal without hesitation to the four Gospels as unimpeachable testimony, the case for evangelical faith might well be deemed secure beyond all overthrow. But it is quite useless to blink the fact that modern criticism seriously challenges the right to do this, and offers reasons for so doing. Now if the Christian Church were content to be an esoteric society, consisting of those who were perfectly satisfied to believe certain doctrines for themselves and let the world alone, it might dismiss every such challenge with a contemptuous wave of the hand. But if Christianity has in very deed a message and mission for all men, if it claims to be the final and universal religion, then it must be prepared to meet all men on rational grounds. It can never be enough to set up some special theory of inspiration, and then under its cover assert the infallible accuracy of every statement in the Christian Scriptures.

It would be quixotic, however, to attempt here an elaborate discussion of all the questions involved in a critical estimate of the New Testament in general, and the four Gospels in particular.[1] We must be

[1] A plain summary, in reply to the rash assertions of popular unbelief, will be found in *Clarion Fallacies*, pp. 133–43; together with a list of some thirty-five books recently written on this theme from the Christian standpoint. To this the reader may well add an interesting chapter in Dr. Marcus Dods' book on *The Bible, its Origin and Nature*, p. 167 (T. & T. Clark), as to the trustworthiness of the Gospels.

content to summarize the modern situation as honestly as briefly. It may be done virtually in two words. The minute infallibility of the Gospels as historic accounts is not maintained—the general reliability is. Dr. Dods puts the case as fairly as words can do: 'In proceeding to inquire into the trustworthiness of the Gospels, it must first of all be clearly apprehended that by "trustworthiness" we do not mean perfect accuracy in every detail, but a faithful fulfilment of their purpose to perpetuate the true image of Christ. It has been over and over again demonstrated that minute accuracy cannot be claimed for the Gospels. What we contend for is that these documents preserve a true picture of Him whose ministry they describe.'[1] Even the extreme position of Prof. Schmiedel, which is fairly well known through the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, is by no means so damaging as some seek to make out. His own statement is that 'the Gospels, though they seem to be very much exposed to doubt, actually contain in themselves the best means of overcoming it.'[2] There are, he insists, specific passages which could not have been invented. 'I select nine such passages, and in order to emphasize their importance give them a special name; I call them the foundation pillars of a really scientific life of Jesus.' But this is by no means all; for he adds[1]: 'As a matter of fact the foundation pillars are but the starting-point for our study of the life of Jesus.'[3]—'We must therefore work upon the principle that together with the foun-

[1] *The Bible*, &c., p. 180.
[2] *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 15.
[3] ib., pp. 24, 27.

dation pillars and as a result of them, everything in the first three Gospels deserves belief which would tend to establish Jesus' greatness, provided that it harmonizes with the picture produced by the foundation pillars, and in other respects does not raise suspicion. And this gives us nothing less than pretty well the whole bulk of Jesus' teaching, in so far as its object is to explain, in a purely religious and ethical way, what God requires of man, and wherein man receives comfort and consolation from God.' We give these words in full, as expressing the utmost reach of what is termed 'destructive' criticism. Let it be clearly understood that we are by no means compelled through modern scholarship to accept this extreme position. But even if we were, it might be said, with no small assurance, that here is all we need.

The most difficult phase of the matter, for a popular restatement, is the extent to which the Fourth Gospel may be quoted as historically reliable. If, on the one hand, it would be foolish to dismiss this testimony offhand, as some German critics would have us do,[1] it would, on the other hand, be dishonest to conceal from non-critical readers of the New Testament that a strong current of doubt on this matter has set in which has to be reckoned with. Most advocates of the newest

[1] Thus Dr. Schmiedel, referring to Dr. Neumann's attitude as to 'whether the Fourth Gospel ought to be used as a source for the life of Jesus,' says that 'his own decision on the matter is uncompromisingly in the negative,' and adds that 'this decision arises out of a view which is making steady and unintorrupted progress' (*Jesus*, by Dr. Arno Neumann, preface, p. xxv.). That such 'progress' is not 'uninterrupted,' we shall presently see. How far 't is 'steady,' must be left to other and more critical occasions.

theology in this country follow the Continental lead.' [1] But it certainly is not as yet demonstrated that all sincere scholarship must do the same. The question of the authorship—which seems to carry with it, as Dr. Schmiedel hints, the consequence that this Gospel, if written by John the beloved disciple, is to be 'preferred before the three others as being the work of an eye-witness'—is by no means settled to the contrary, so long as men of the calibre of Dr. Drummond, the learned Principal of Manchester (Unitarian) College, Oxford, can publish their deliberate conclusion, after prolonged investigation, that it is genuine.[2]

When the unwarranted theory of verbal inspiration has been set aside, and the equally unnecessary demand for precise infallibility dismissed, there are always two methods of scrutiny open to the ordinary reader no less than to the critic, by which the general reliability

[1] Thus Mr. Rhondda Williams says definitely (*The New Theology*, p. 53): 'It is quite true that in order to say this, I have to disregard the Fourth Gospel as a historical source for the life of Jesus.'

[2] See the volume referred to, with the writer's own concluding words, on p. 21, above. That other scholars of repute such as Drs. Westcott, Sanday, Dods, &c. share his conviction, is well known and should be regarded. It may be well worth while here to quote two of these conclusions. Dr. Westcott's summary is this: 'It is possible to explain away in detail this piece of evidence and that, but the acceptance of the book as the work of the apostle adequately explains all the phenomena without any violence; and hitherto all the new evidence which has come to light has supported this universal belief of the Christian Society, while it has seriously modified the rival theories which have been set up against it.' And Dr. Dods, writing twenty years later, says: 'When to the internal evidence the weight of external attestation is added, by far the most probable conclusion is that the Fourth Gospel is the work of the Apostle John, and that it is historically trustworthy.'

of the Gospels may be established. These are, their relations to one another, and to the gospel according to Paul. It must never be forgotten that Paul's four main letters (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians) the authorship of which is beyond controversy,[1] were written some time before the earliest Gospel, so that it is quite impossible to say that the transcendental Christ which he exhibits, had been evolved from the Gospels through pious imagination. Whilst as to the much-emphasized 'difference' between Paul's representations and the Gospel narratives, Dr. Schmiedel, as an equally critical and unbiassed witness, has again expressed the whole truth when he says: 'It may be enough in a single word to point out that Paul, according to his own declaration (2 Cor. v. 16; 1 Cor. i. 23; Gal. iii.) in his oral preaching, never regarded it as part of his work to give details of the life of Jesus, and that his epistolary correspondence with the Churches which he had founded, afforded him even less occasion for the imparting of such.'[2] Even if, therefore, the Jesus of John's Gospel were to be omitted, it would still be impossible to get rid of the witness of Paul, which is virtually to the same effect.

But the reliability of the New Testament account does not depend upon any one of these taken singly. It depends upon the consensus of the whole. The discrepancies on which anti-Christian critics lay such

[1] Thus Dr. Schmiedel says, 'As Dr. Neumann and the present writer believe, it is possible to show that the genuineness of these epistles is unassailable.' And the date he assigns is between A.D. 50 and 60.

[2] *Jesus*, Arno Neumann, preface, p. xvi.

unmeasured stress, serve in their very irreconcilableness to demonstrate the independence of the various accounts. But when the utmost attention has been paid to them, they do not give us two lives, two persons, two characters, but one. One only, however unique and incomparable. Here, therefore, is still room for the oft-quoted words of such an unbiassed witness as Mr. John Stuart Mill: 'Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left—a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. Who among His disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee—still less the early Christian writers.' [1]

Hence, speaking generally, whilst we are bound to-day to listen respectfully to the carefully-expressed conclusions of scholarship, and frankly acknowledge that they may alter the ordinary believing estimate of some passages and altogether remove others, it may be fairly affirmed that the reliability of our Christian records, as sources for a true life and character of Jesus, remains—not unaffected but unshaken. We are warranted in taking them as, on the whole, the genuine biography of a life as real as wonderful.

[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, cheap edition, p. 106.

We are not dealing with mere myth, or pious fiction, when we proceed to investigate the portraiture as it deserves. The authorship and date of the Second Epistle of Peter may be beyond critical determination, but the writer's affirmation truly summarizes the modern as well as the ancient position—'We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

(3) The Actual Delineation

It is to be understood, then, that we take the record as we find it; comparing indeed one representation with another, and checking or correcting the general impression by the comparison; but entirely declining to accept the modern canon of some critics, that wherever the miraculous appears it is to be explained away, and that the supernatural element in any passage brands it without further scrutiny as false.

Preserved from such extravagances, the testimony of the New Testament may be said to be fivefold. We have in our hands the portrayal of a manhood which is real, perfect, unique, supernatural, and divine-human. In summarizing each of these, we must be content, without much actual quotation, to refer the reader to the writings themselves, and leave with him the responsibility of heeding or rejecting the critical slight—often amounting to contempt—put upon the Fourth Gospel. To us it seems to be alike unwarranted and unavailing.

(i) *Real Manhood*

Upon this there is to-day little need to dwell. The ancient Gnostic, or Docetic, heresy finds no modern representative. It is rather assumed now that whilst we may certainly insist, in the name of reason and history, upon the actuality of the life and work of Jesus, it must be on the condition that He was an ordinary man. This at the outset may be freely conceded. Waiving, for the moment, the question of His birth, the exhibition of Christ's real humanness is put beyond doubt. We have a simple and natural record of infancy and growth, a manifest development of mind and body, vivid portrayal of the realities of hunger and thirst, pain and enjoyment, sorrow and gladness, with whatever else goes to make us all human. All these point unequivocally to Him as verily bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He was, in all respects, the Son of Man. This remains, whatever else may be superadded.

(ii) *Perfect Manhood*

This means manifestly, not a being incapable of sin, for such a being would not be man at all, but one showing Himself able to overcome all inducement to evil, of every kind and grade. Of such a character,

[1] Thus Dr. Warschauer in his little book above mentioned, *The New Evangel*, says: 'A being incapable of sin would be most wonderful, but he would not and could not be an example to us. On the other hand, the appearance in our midst of one who while He shared our common life and manifestations, was capable of not sinning, would make that One the King and Guide of the race, and such a One we believe Jesus to have been' (p. 97).

viewed thus negatively, we have an unmistakable exhibition. Not that sinlessness is to be lightly assumed or carelessly asserted. It is far too deep and high an ideal. But in the present case, alone in the world's history, a fourfold attestation is set before us in these records.

(*a*) His constant demeanour and the unbroken tendency of His behaviour under all circumstances, are distinguished by the absence of those traits of moral wrong which, in some degree, mar even the best record amongst ordinary men.[1]

(*b*) His own avowal is no less justifiable than startling. 'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?' can neither be proved critically doubtful, nor rigidly confined to the circumstances of the moment when it was uttered. It does but express succinctly His whole life-attitude. 'I do always those things which please Him,' was the true representation of His unbroken relation to His Father. But such a challenge as His the noblest man could not utter if he would, and would not if he could, even to his nearest friend. Yet it was surely far more, thus to challenge the bitterest enemies. Those who surrounded Him made no reply. Considering their attitude, the inference is quite fair that they could not. Modern attempts to answer it have in every case done small credit either to the head or the heart of the critic.

(*c*) Those who were closest to Him and knew Him best, conceded from the beginning all that such a claim

[1] The attempts to disprove this by means of the 'barren fig-tree' incident, and a few picked words, &c., have but served to show an animus as shallow as futile on the part of would-be defamers.

involved. They ever treated Him as being not one of themselves. Later convictions came to pass, not as mythical inventions, but as natural confirmations of what had been acknowledged from the first by all, friend and foe alike, who were nearest to Him.

(*d*) Many of the noblest unbelievers have freely given testimonies which amount to the same estimate. Rousseau's estimate we have already noticed.[1] Strauss wrote that 'Amongst the personages to whom mankind is indebted for the perfecting of its moral consciousness, Jesus occupies at any rate the highest place. By incarnating goodness in His own person He imparted to it a living warmth.' He was 'the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion; the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible.' Renan avowed that 'Jesus is in every respect unique, and nothing can be compared with Him.' Theodore Parker said that 'Christ unites in Himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realizing the dreams of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudices of His age, nation, or sect, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven and true as God.' Also Miss F. P. Cobbe declared that 'The originator of the Christian movement must have been the greatest soul of His time. If He did not speak these words of wisdom who could have recorded them for Him?'

If such estimates as these—which might easily be multiplied—coming from such sources, are worthy of regard, we scarcely need to appeal to others, not less

[1] See p. 90 above.

thoughtful or sincere, from avowedly Christian writers. In the fiercest light of modern criticism and after all the scrutiny of the ages, we are obliged to say that His manhood remains earth's fairest exhibition of moral excellence.

(iii) *Unique Manhood*

Mr. John Stuart Mill's words, above quoted—'not more unlike all his precursors than all His followers'—have been overwhelmingly confirmed. The same sentiment is even more strongly expressed in one of the ablest anti-Christian critical works of recent years[2]: 'Christ was a man of unparalleled purity and elevation of character, surpassing in His sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Chakya Mouni (Buddha) and putting to the blush the teaching of Socrates and Plato and the whole round of Greek philosophers.' It may be said without hesitation, that in no respect has His character been paralleled in history.[3] He was of no nation, no age, no party, no

[1] Such as—to mention one only—the late Dr. A. S. Wilkins, Professor of Latin in Owens College, Manchester. In his cultured and forceful little volume *The Light of the World*—which is not nearly so well known as it deserves to be—he says truly: 'Christ Himself is the principle of Christian morality. He is the King whose subjects win from passionate loyalty and love the strength to follow His commandments. He is Himself the perfect example, and the attainment of likeness to Him is the end of all strivings after virtue, and is itself the rich reward of all self-denial and sacrifice.'

[2] *Supernatural Religion*, by Mr. W. R. Cassels, vol. ii. 487.

[3] The attempts which have been made during recent years to bracket Jesus with Buddha, if not in some wild cases to derive Him from Buddha, are open to plain reply, as I have shown in *Clarion Fallacies*, pp. 171–80. But they are best estimated from the

sect, no class, but truly timeless and cosmopolitan, belonging equally to every generation of humanity.

For simplicity allied with real sublimity, for true originality no less than acknowledged organic connexion with preceding Judaistic sources, His doctrine is unapproached by anything in mythology or philosophy. In full view of all that has been put forth during recent years under the head of comparative religion,[1] with especial reference to ancient and savage cults, we are warranted in maintaining that the realities of Christ's person and history—the unquestionable facts, the known associations, the demonstrable uniqueness, the seeming contradictions, the insoluble problems, the unequalled influence—have no real parallel in history.

As the One above all mankind who—in Mr. Lecky's well-known words—'has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice,' He remains the world's amazement to this hour. To finish the quotation, 'He has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists.'[2]

Yet He alone, amongst all earth's best and noblest men, manifested unconsciousness of sin just in propor-

standpoint of acknowledged experts such as Professor Rhys Davids, and Dr. St. Clair Tisdale. For these, see the *Hibbert Lectures* for 1881, by the former; and *The Noble Eightfold Path*, by the latter.

[1] Typically in such works as Dr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*, &c.

[2] *History of European Morals*, ii., p. 88.

tion to unquestionable goodness. All other men of faith have ever agreed that

> They who fain would serve Thee best,
> Are conscious most of wrong within.

But He, in the presence of God as well as of man, confessed no sin and acknowledged no need for repentance or renewal.

This is undoubtedly the representation of the Gospels as we possess them. Hence advocates of the latest form of anti-Christian criticism are driven to the desperate assertion that all this is but a case of borrowed mythological wrappings around an unhistorical figure.[1] In sober truth, however, all the reply that these vagaries merit, is found still in what a religious free-lance wrote fifty years ago: 'Shall we be told that such a man never lived—the whole story is a lie! Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived. But who then did their wonders, and thought their thought? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus.'[2]

(iv) *Supernatural Manhood*

Here, confessedly, the relation with much modern thought becomes strained. But we are considering,

[1] Thus Mr. J. M. Robertson 'holds the myths contained in the Gospels to be connected with the story of a Jew of the name of Jesus who was slain about a century before the Christian era.'

[2] *Life of Jesus*, Theodore Parker, of Boston, p. 363. Those who desire further considerations will find them in abundance in *The Jesus of the Evangelists*, by the Rev. C. A. Row. The forty years which have elapsed since its publication have not in the least affected its main positions.

for the moment, simply what the New Testament and especially the Gospels teach. Unless and until these are torn to shreds, it is utterly impossible to get rid of the superhuman elements in the manhood of Jesus. This at least stands out vividly incontrovertible. If Christ's birth, His works, His whole character, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, do not differ, by a supernaturalness which needs here no defining, from the career of all other men, then the Gospel narratives are the least reliable and the most misleading of all the records of history or religion.[1]

Even if no more of the Gospels be assumed as reliable than Dr. Schmiedel's words allow, yet two results irrepressibly emerge. First, that the supernatural element, although not regarded as the supreme proof of revelation, is yet as essentially part of the record as the heart—though not the only vital organ—is of the body. If we accept without demur his test of credible events, viz. 'the impossibility of their having been invented,' when fairly applied it strengthens rather than weakens the case for the supernatural. And secondly, that in full view of the whole case, the supernatural is here more natural than the merely natural. If there were sufficient grounds for regarding Christ Himself and His kingdom as the inevitable product of the forces, religious, national, political, of His age, both He and it might then be pronounced

[1] Another work by Mr. C. A. Row here also deserves mention. viz. *The Supernatural in the New Testament.* Published some thirty years since, it will of course be viewed askance, if not despised, by latest criticism. But let the reader procure it and judge for himself, through fair study, whether such an estimate is justified.

simply natural. But this is precisely what cannot be shown.[1] Until the authenticity of the New Testament is absolutely shattered,[2] the mere naturalness of Christ's manhood would involve greater miracles than the avowed supernaturalness does.

(v) *Divine-Human Manhood*

Here we arrive at the final truth which must for ever differentiate the Christianity of the New Testament from all other developments of it which claim the same name. For nothing short of an incarnation of the divine in the human, both being equally real in one personality, answers to the whole delineation of Jesus

[1] The gravity of this assertion is duly weighed. In succinct form the case is well put by Professor Henslow's *Christ no Product of Evolution* (Stoneman). I am, of course, aware that the 'naturalness' both of Christ Himself and of early Christianity is roundly asserted by some modern writers. But the words of Professor Wilkins (Preface to *The Light of the World*, pp. viii. and ix.) have lost none of their force, though written some years since. 'The instances of the suspension of the laws of nature supposed to be involved in the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation are presenting very serious stumbling-blocks in the way of many earnest seekers for the truth. But the rejection of this belief, the very sheet-anchor of hope for the Church and the world, involves the hypothesis of a no less miraculous suspension of the laws that rule in the world of mind. If the need of an adequate cause for the appearance of a phenomenon be held to exist as fully for the spiritual as for the material, then it is no longer a question of Faith or Reason which divides the Christian and the unbeliever. It is a question whether the canons of a rigid induction shall or shall not be followed for mind as well as for matter; whether we will test all truth, or only the lower and less important, by a strictly scientific method.'

[2] For a wild statement to this effect by Mr. Jos. McCabe, and its refutation by competent scholars, see *Haeckel's Monism False*, by the present writer, pp. 556–65.

Christ as presented in Gospels and Epistles. This is for the modern mind confessedly a much greater difficulty than the existence and action of the supernatural element, even assuming the latter to be demonstrated. Through all the Christian ages men's minds have been more or less staggered at this representation. No attempt is here made to compress into a few lines all that has been, is, or should be, said on so vast a theme. For the moment we simply sum up that which is actually found in the Christian records.

(*a*) The sinlessness of Jesus, however fully acknowledged, is after all a negative characteristic and does not represent the whole truth. Positively, the portrayal is that of One who is distinctly human, yet living a daily life of manifest and unbroken yet unparalleled and indescribable communion with God. The halo drawn around Him in pictures by the old masters, is not wholly fanciful. There was a corresponding spiritual reality. It seems impossible not to acknowledge in Him the exhibition of a human character so saturated with the divine, as to overflow with heavenly influences at all times and under all circumstances. This, however, is but the foundation of much more.

(*b*) He gives us His own estimate and explanation of all, in the frequent though stupendous claim of essential oneness with God as His Father, in a sense and to an extent which cannot possibly be applied without blasphemy to any ordinary man. When He said 'I and My Father are one,' no honest exegesis, taking such words in their whole setting, can represent them as simply meaning what any disciple may say, 'We too are one with God, in so far as our lives express

the same thing.'[1] Assuredly it never can be 'the same thing' in any saint. For it is inseparably connected with other assertions, extending alike into the unmeasured past—'before Abraham was I am,' and into the limitless future—'We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.' Every Jew who heard Him thus speak, must have remembered as clearly as Himself the hallowed significance of the words 'I am.' Their claim to identity with Deity is unmistakable. Nor is it any sufficient reply to the contrary to say that they are found in the Fourth Gospel. For their whole transcendence may be fully paralleled in the four indubitable letters of the Apostle Paul, written half a century earlier, as well as in those other writings of the New Testament which only extravagant criticism can rule out of account.

(*c*) Moreover, these claims of Christ all harmonize, to an extent of completeness which can only be termed organic, with His real though unostentatious assumption of other attributes and prerogatives such as, by unquestioning consent of all around Him, belonged only to God. 'Who can forgive sins but God only?'—they said who watched His words with such hostile keenness. Yet He ceased not to forgive as well as to heal. 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them.'—'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'—unless such language—which is only typical of much more—be either utterly untrue or meaningless, it is such as the best of mere men would assuredly be the very last to utter.

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 94.

(*d*) That He was entirely conscious of the stupendousness of His attitude, is manifest from the proofs to which He daily appeals, and which we cannot possibly overlook. In addition to the indescribable charm of His personal influence, which sent back spell-bound the rough men who came to seize Him, with 'Never man spake like this man' on their awe-struck lips, His words and His works alike constituted His credentials. His impressive doctrine and His wondrous deeds ceaselessly combined to testify that He was no blaspheming fanatic.

The former cannot be worthily characterized in a few sentences. It is as true as easy to say that it was unimpeachable in its purity, unparalleled in its loftiness, ever-applicable in its simplicity. It is perhaps best summarized in the deliberate words of one of the greatest of unbelievers: 'With reference to all that bears upon the love of God and of our neighbour, upon purity of heart and upon the individual life, nothing can be added to the moral intuition which Jesus Christ has left us.' [1] How any able man could acknowledge so much as that and not follow out its logical consequences, is his responsibility, not ours. When Renan exclaimed, in view of Christ's whole life and character, —'No more shall men distinguish between Thee and God,' such an estimate, even if it be somewhat rhapsodical, becomes the only conclusion to which sober intelligence, unless predetermined by some bias, can come.

As to His wondrous deeds, we are to-day only too familiar with the critical and often scornful treatment

[1] Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, popular edition, p. 625.

which is applied to the miracles related in the Gospels. For the genuineness of the superhuman element involved, we must be content to refer to other volumes.[1] The most ordinary reader cannot but distinguish His mighty works from all others recorded either in the Bible or out of it. Their characteristic features are unmistakable. The actual exercise of power involved, even in those which a reasonable criticism leaves to-day unchallenged, far exceeds all feats of thaumaturgy, or marvels of magic, or freaks of modern spiritism, or discoveries and applications of recent psychical research. Psychological laws and influences may explain much, but certainly not all the works to which He appealed as His witness. The utterly impartial testimony of Professor Seeley holds to-day as true as ever. 'The fact that Christ appeared as a worker of miracles is the best-attested fact in His whole biography, both by the absolute unanimity of all the witnesses, by the confirmatory circumstances just mentioned, and by countless other special confirmations of circumstances not likely to be invented, striking sayings connected with them, &c., in particular cases.'[2]

But their invariably merciful end and beneficent motive lift them high above all mere display of abnormal power; whilst the whole manner of their accomplishment removes them far beyond the signs of prophets, or wonderful doings of the disciples who afterwards, in His name, wrought kindred healings. All His

[1] More especially Dr. A. B. Bruce's *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, published by Hodder and Stoughton, together with Mr. C. A. Row's volume mentioned above.

[2] *Ecce Homo*, 1903 edition, pref., p. x.

wondrous works were done directly, without appeal to any other name or power than His own, and by no other spell than His mere command. Yet always for the good of others; never on His own behalf. 'It was for this,' well says Professor Seeley, 'that Christ was worshipped, that He whose power and greatness as shown in His miracles were overwhelming, denied Himself the use of His power, treated it as a slight thing, walked among men as though He were one of them, relieved them in distress, taught them to love each other, bore with undisturbed patience a perpetual hailstorm of calumny until, petrified and bewildered with astonishment, men saw Him arrested and put to death with torture, refusing steadfastly to use in His own behalf the power He conceived He held for the benefit of others.'[1] There is absolutely no parallel to this, in all the world's known thaumaturgies or mythologies.

(*e*) That such a life should issue in the death which followed, is at once the most natural human consequence, and the most glaring contradiction, apparently, of His own doctrine of the divine Fatherhood, in all history. Never was a life so pure and unselfish towards men; never one so transcendently linked with God. Never, all that is best within us declares, ought such a tragedy to have been permitted. Yet He Himself not only clearly foresaw and without murmuring submitted to it, but openly declared that in His own power He would triumph over death and become for evermore the Lord of life. 'My life,' He said, 'no man taketh from Me—I have power to lay

[1] *Ecce Homo*, 1903 edition, p. 46.

it down and I have power to take it again '—'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' With such words, mysterious indeed at first but afterwards plain, did He substantiate His claim to be 'the Son of God with power,' as the apostles preached long years before the Gospels we now read were written. The reality of His Resurrection stamps His oneness with God the Father as being something transcendental and essential, immeasurably differentiated from the communion with God attained by the very holiest of His ancient or modern disciples.

(*f*) No single one, perhaps, of the foregoing elements in the actual portraiture of Jesus as we have it in the New Testament, suffices to exhibit fully the divine-human manhood. But when all are put together, and to the total effect there is added the actual result of His influence on all who have been worthy of Him—for here we may leave the 'corruptions of Christianity' out of account—in all the ages up to the present hour, it seems impossible to formulate a true expression of the whole in any other way than by believing and teaching that He was indeed God manifest in the flesh; the Son of man as truly as any one of us; but also the Son of God in a sense whose unapproachableness by us is for ever marked in His own prayer: 'And now, O Father, glorify Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.'

The modern mental mood may refuse to listen to such words, may even dismiss with critical cynicism the Gospel which contains them, and dissect out of the New Testament all that it deems similarly exaggerated sentiment. But unless that is done—unless, in a word,

the whole Christian record is treated after the fashion of a surgeon who should be unwise enough to demand an autopsy in order to see whether a patient was alive,—the living Christ stands out before our vision as One who was in all reality both human and divine.

Certainly the estimate and testimony of the apostles and of the early Church—even from the very earliest—constituted but an echo of all His own foregoing claim. No amount of modern criticism has shaken the fact, historical research does but make it the more sure, that His true disciples from the first, whether they understood much or little, reverenced Him as their Lord and Master. Those who would cheerfully have died for monotheism, hailed Him as their divine King. Multitudes who had never worshipped any but the God of Abraham, offered Him their hearts' lowliest homage. Amidst all the conflicts and the heresies that so soon came in to mar His kingdom, this was the truth most intensely held and least controverted, that Christ was transcendently one with the Father and the Spirit. For the justification of such a summary we must refer to the volumes innumerable which have been written. It is the only statement that can be made with fair regard to all the facts.

We are thus brought to a plain issue which sooner or later must be frankly faced. Are we to accept the New Testament representation of Jesus, or not? If we are, then when all the textual corrections and exegetical modifications which a scholarly and reasonable criticism demands are conceded, there yet remains a character which cannot possibly be estimated, explained,

or accepted, as merely human. The whole case, therefore, stands thus, that be the difficulties or consequences what they may, either the record is false, or Jesus Christ was as truly and transcendently divine as human.

If, however, we are not to rely upon the New Testament portrayal, if, under the guise of historical criticism, whatever offends the subjectivity of modern critical philosophy [1] is to be cast out as unreliable, then indeed it is open to such critics to construct any kind of Christ they please. But the result of their imaginings will always be insignificant, because necessarily unreliable. For any man can, at any time, reasonably refuse to 'subscribe' to any portion of it. We are bound to affirm, on the contrary, that if there is reliability enough in the Christian records to warrant the goodness of Jesus which even advanced critics generally assert,[2] then there is also sufficient to guarantee to us both His own truthfulness, and the genuineness of the statements made by Him which manifestly rule out for ever all merely human estimates of Himself and of His claims.

[1] Thus says Mr. Rhondda Williams: 'While I would not subscribe to the phrase used in the New Testament only in the Johannine writings, The only begotten Son'—'It is quite true that in order to say this, I have to disregard the Fourth Gospel as a historical source for the life of Jesus' (*The New Theology*, pp. 53, 100). These utterances are typical of many more.

[2] 'Jesus of Nazareth the brother man, the pitying friend, He who went about doing good, who realized intensely His relation to, and communion with God, and whose religion was love to God and man, is an undoubted historic figure' (*The New Theology*, Mr. Rhondda Williams, p. 103). This little book is dedicated to Mr. R. J. Campbell. Yet the latter says, 'The new theology is not a victory for Unitarianism.' But if words mean anything, what is the attitude of such quotations as the above, but Unitarianism pure and simple?

(4) The Relation to Modern Thought

No outline of Christian doctrine, however carefully stated, can hope to escape modern scrutiny, even if it were desirable that it should do so. Theologians are now quite commonly represented [1] as intellectual scarecrows; and it is certain that the *ipse dixit* of a priest will never again settle any question. The creed of a Church, indeed, rather excites opposition to-day than compels acceptance. But the true believer will raise no objections to the demand that Christian doctrines, like all others, must be received on their merits, and their reasonableness demonstrated. Certainly to the doctrines which involve the greatest issues, this canon of reason must have fullest application.

What, then, constitutes the difficulty which leads not only to the rejection of the evangelical doctrine of the Person of Christ by thoughtful men outside the Churches, but to the formulation of an alleged 'new theology' as a necessity within their pale? Apart from the impatience and superficiality which characterize much modern unbelief, three elements of the present case must be recognized. The general shrinking from the supernatural in any form; the miraculous conception, or, as it is often termed, the virgin birth;

[1] Even where one would least have expected it, as in Mr. Campbell's recent book on *The New Theology*. Quotation is unfortunately unnecessary because contempt for the average theologian permeates the whole. Surely the charity of Mr. Rhondda Williams might here also find just application: 'Mere railing against the creeds, as if those who made them had been wilfully doing something wrong, shows a want of understanding and the lack of the historic sense.'

the union in one Christ of the two natures, human and divine. Each of these merits careful attention.

(i) The wholesale denial of the supernatural has become an open fashion in not a few quarters, and has been followed, even in some Christian circles, by a kind of half-ashamed endeavour to whittle away the supernatural element in Christianity to its very minimum. That both these attitudes are unwarranted has been shown elsewhere.[1] It is only necessary here to point out that neither the acceptance of the principle of evolution in science, nor of the immanence of God in religious philosophy, rules out the reality and working of the supernatural, as contemplated by the New Testament representation of Christ and His work. For evolution is itself but a process which is unthinkable without adequate cause, and this cause answers completely to the divine power which the alleged miracles connote. Even if it be true that the doctrine of divine immanence needs now more emphasis, yet—to quote one of the ablest expounders of the newest theology—'we may rest in the assurance that whatever else God may be, as interpreted in the light of the doctrine of immanence, He is *at least* personal.'[2] But this 'at least,' contains in it the inevitable concession of the divine transcendence. So that we have here only a later philosophical statement of theism, and in regard to this, half a century ago, Mr. J. S. Mill showed that it carried with it indubitably the possibility of the miraculous. When, therefore, the term supernatural

[1] See *The Miracles of Unbelief*, by the present writer, p. xxv. &c., and the list of works hereupon given at the end of that volume.

[2] *The New Evangel*, by Dr. Warschauer, p. 69.

is rightly interpreted, it is seen to be less open to objection than ever. For it involves both the divine immanence and transcendence; and whilst the former distinguishes it utterly from the Deism of the eighteenth century, the latter for ever prevents it from being identified with Pantheism. Hence Prof. Huxley's verdict is confirmed, that the supernatural element becomes, after all, just a question of sufficient evidence. Christianity rests upon the avowal that the evidence for the divine-human Christ of the Gospels is sufficient, when fairly estimated.

(ii) But attention has lately been drawn more especially to the birth of Christ, with a view to discredit the primitive tradition which has until recently almost universally prevailed.[1] Not only does Rationism laugh scornfully at the bare notion, on the ground of the naturalism hinted at above, but all the advocates of the newest theology are one in their dismissal of this ancient article of faith.[2] The prevalent notion seems to be, that in so doing they are making the gospel of Christ more easily acceptable to modern minds. But

[1] It is a very superficial remark of the most recent theology that 'The virgin birth of Jesus was apparently unknown to the primitive Church, for the earliest New Testament writings make no mention of it.' As to Paul—'Nowhere does he give us so much as a hint of anything supernatural attending the mode of Jesus Christ's entry into the world.' That fact is fairly estimated and the suggested inference dismissed, by the remark of Dr. Schmiedel quoted above (p. 118). He, certainly, will not be accused of orthodox bias.

[2] Even Dr. Warschauer, whose general statement is much more reverent and careful than the rest, sums up thus: 'We think the time has come when we should frankly say that the virgin birth of Jesus, being insufficiently attested, does not command belief, and that Luke is to be taken literally in speaking of Joseph and Mary as his parents—His father and mother.'

it is surely plain that the supernatural element can never be a matter of quantity. If in but one single feature of the whole fact of Christ and His influence, a superhuman power be made manifest, all economy in the miraculous—apart, of course, from such puerilities as are found in the apocryphal writings—is waste. For which reason it is neither wise nor fair to estimate the worth of the 'birth stories,' severed from their connexion with the whole Gospel representation of Jesus. The suggestion of evangelical doctrine is much more that we should accept the narratives of the miraculous conception because Jesus is so shown in other ways to be 'the Son of God with power,' than that Jesus must be superhuman simply because of these narratives.

The full discussion of this question does not enter into our present purpose.[1] A plain protest and a brief outline will suffice. The protest is against the sweeping dogmatism, not always free from personal contempt, with which this doctrine is brushed out of the way by some advocates of recent views.[2] The poor theologians,

[1] Those who have been influenced by Mr. Campbell's book, as well as perhaps by the works of Dr. Warschauer, Mr. Rhondda Williams, Professor Lobstein, and W. Soltau, should remember that there is another side. Brief but interesting statements of this will be found in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, articles 'Incarnation' and 'Jesus Christ'; *Some Thoughts on the Incarnation*, by Dean Robinson; *The Virgin Birth of our Lord*, by Dr. Randolph; 'The virgin birth' by Dr. Barrett in the volume entitled *The Old Faith and the New Theology*, and *The Miracles of Unbelief* by the present writer.

[2] Thus: 'But to read these stories as literal fact is to ask us to believe that for which there is no evidence, and to push Jesus out of our world so completely that He becomes unreal as a human being' (*The New Theology*, Mr. Rh. Williams, p. 30). Again: 'But why hesitate about the question? The greatness of Jesus and the value

as ever, are nothing but ignorant obscurantists herein—and all who accept the ancient view are necessarily ignorant or credulous. But all such representations, no matter by whom made, are as untrue as unworthy. If the evangelical teacher is glad—as in these days happily he is—to note the residual faith of extreme critics, these in turn ought to be ready to concede intellectual respect and sincerity to those who think on other lines than their own.

As to critical faith, Professor Lobstein's words are welcome: 'If we set aside the dogma which the school has deduced from the stories of Matthew and Luke, it is that we may subscribe, with absolute sincerity and joyful assurance, to the Johannine saying, echo of our experience and confirmation of our faith: 'Jesus said unto them; I am from above; I am not of this world.' [1] Whilst in regard to intelligence and the older views, no worthier or more modest plea can be found than Dr. Robinson's—'that a belief in the virgin birth is not inconsistent with loyalty to the principles of literary and historical research, and that it cannot be dismissed off-hand as a relic of primitive superstition.' [2]

That the primitive Churches did believe the birth

of His revelation to mankind are in no way either assisted or diminished by the manner of His entry into the world.' This, we are bound to say, is sufficiently dogmatic. Yet, unconsciously contradicting himself, the writer on the same page says that he now thinks that the ordinary belief in the manner of entry of Jesus 'operates as a hindrance to spiritual religion' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 104).

[1] *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, p. 112.

[2] *Some Thoughts on the Incarnation*, p. 44.

of Jesus to have been supernatural, is witnessed not only by the branding of Cerinthus as a heretic, but by the testimony of Irenaeus, Ignatius, Tertullian, Aristides, and Origen. But even if all such witness be left out of account, we still have the Gospels in our hand. We are by no means bound to concede, without a murmur, that the narratives of Matthew and Luke are now shown to 'belong to the poetry of religion, not to history.'[1] And the case becomes really desperate when the critic is driven simply to say in regard to the most distinctive phrase of the Fourth Gospel—'the only begotten'—that he will not subscribe to it. On such principles we may make history what we please.

Another critic's assertion is that 'the Fourth Gospel ignores the belief in the virgin birth, and even seems to do so of set purpose as belittling and materializing the truth.'[2] This also, in its place, must certainly be contested. Any wholesale objection on the ground that the supernatural is involved, we have seen to be inapplicable. But is it really more permissible to say that 'Those who insist on this doctrine will find themselves in danger of proving too much, for pressed to its logical conclusion it removes Jesus altogether from the category of humanity, in any real sense'[3]? No, it is not. For evangelical theology makes quite as sure of the humanity of Jesus, in the most real sense, as any such suggestion can do. On the other hand, if

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 103. For a fuller discussion of this I must be content to refer to *The Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. 39–45.

[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 98.

[3] ib., R. J. Campbell, p. 101.

we take the narratives at all, we must take them as they stand. And the direct statement—'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee,' is quite sufficient answer to the objection that a human mother would convey a tainted nature as really as an ordinary parentage. Furthermore, it is not true to say that 'Every birth is just as wonderful as a virgin birth could possibly be, and just as much a direct act of God.'[1] If it were, there would surely be no reason for all the strenuous opposition now raised against the Gospel narratives. But the difference is alike obvious and significant.

The greatest reason for objection, however, resides elsewhere. It is found in the apparent conflict between this suggested miraculous conception, and the accepted doctrine of evolution on the part of science, as well as of divine immanence on the part of religious philosophy. 'Orthodox' science demands absolute and unbroken continuity on behalf of its principle of evolution. To satisfy it, Christ must be purely and only human, so as to necessitate no breach of continuity with His ancestors in any way. This demand the New Testament does not profess to meet. Modern Christian thought is perfectly willing to recognize 'the sacredness of science.' But what it is not willing to concede is the infallible omniscience of science, with its assumed veto upon all the possibilities of omnipotence.

So, too, in regard to what are termed 'new views,' relative to the whole vast theme of Incarnation. Here we see plainly why the notion of a supernatural birth must, at all cost, be removed. If true, it is, confessedly,

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 104.

the pointer to 'an impassable gulf between Jesus and every other person who has been ever born of an earthly mother.'[1] This impassable gulf, neo-Christianity strongly asserts, does not exist.[2] Evangelical doctrine, as pleading for that which is essential to the Christianity of the New Testament, certainly would restrict the description 'God manifest in the flesh' to Jesus alone. The new theology would extend it 'in a lesser degree' to all humanity, and would maintain that 'in the end it will be as true of every individual soul as ever it was of Jesus.'[3] Apart from the self-contradiction which such an avowal exhibits, in first postulating 'a lesser degree,' and then dismissing it, here in very deed, 'emerges a great point of difference.' Whatever else this new suggestion may be, so long as the New Testament

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 80.

[2] 'The theologian may declare Jesus assumed human nature, but He was eternally divine before He did so, and we are not. I do not need to refute this argument; the trend of modern thought is already doing so most effectually. It is a gratuitous assumption, without a shred of evidence to support it' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 80). It is difficult to understand how any sincere and well-read man can make such an outrageous affirmation as this. Students of Christology will know how to estimate the 'shred of evidence.' The fact that certain currents of modern thought are opposed, is an entirely different thing from the sweeping assertion that all modern thought is refuting the higher conception of the person of Christ. We must say plainly, that it is doing nothing of the kind. Any reader with an open mind, who will study, say, only two books issued by Dr. Fairbairn—*The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* and *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*—will, whether he agrees with the writer or not, at least own that the theological theory which in the name of newness sweeps away all such considerations as not amounting to even 'a shred of evidence,' is simply childish in its hasty petulance. One greatly regrets being compelled to notice such surprising utterances.

[3] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 83.

remains worthy of regard, it is not Christianity. The New Testament representation of the gospel of Christ, we must unhesitatingly affirm, depends quite as much upon the gulf existing from everlasting to everlasting between Jesus Christ and any human soul, as upon the reality of that communion with Him which may be experienced by any saint that ever was or will be. The pre-determination to set aside the Fourth Gospel, and reduce the supernatural generally to a vanishing point, is here as unavailing as it is unwarranted. For the earlier testimony of Paul remains; and his doctrine of the Christ Jesus who 'emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,' [1] is just as fatal to the new admixture of Pantheism with Unitarianism, under the Christian name, as anything found in the Johannine writings. To put his words side by side with those just quoted from the recent recrudescence of old heresies, is to see why the testimony of Paul also must be brushed away.[2] There is here, beyond all question,

[1] The attempts to question the genuineness of the Epistle to the Philippians may be dismissed as not meriting consideration. The English reader may be interested to note the rendering of such a scholar as Dr. Weymouth in this important passage: 'Let the same disposition be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Although from the beginning He had the nature of God, He did not reckon His equality with God a treasure to be tightly grasped. Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory and took on Him the nature of a bond-servant by becoming a man like other men. And being recognized as truly human, He humbled Himself, and even stooped to die; yes, to die on a cross.'

[2] 'Paul says this and Paul says that, and when Paul has spoken there is no more to be said. But why should it be so? Paul's opinion is simply Paul's opinion' (p. 188). Really, one would think that it was the *Clarion*, or *God and my Neighbour*, that one was reading, not a cultured Christian teacher's deliberately published thesis.

not only a great difference between two theological conceptions, but 'an impassable gulf' between the Christ of the New Testament, and the Christ of the newest theology. Whatever scorn it may be fashionable to pour to-day upon theologians, it is at least not they but the whole doctrine of the New Testament which unequivocally asserts that Jesus Christ 'assumed human nature, but He was eternally divine before He did so, and we are not.'

The serious significance of the miraculous conception of Jesus is that it, in consonance with the doctrine of the Trinity which is supported on other grounds, permits of the definite acceptance of the divine pre-eminence of Jesus, which the denial of it does not. It is an easy saying in itself that, 'The one great word of the new theology is unity, the unity of the individual with the race, and of the race with God.'[1] But there is nothing in it, until we know what unity signifies. Unity with God, without intervening gulfs alike between man and man and between God and man, is simply pantheistic identity. Which never was nor will be Christianity.

It is said, even by some evangelical teachers,[2] that 'the doctrine of the miraculous conception may be left an open question.' Certainly it may, so far as anathemas are concerned. But it may not, so far as relates to the understanding and appreciation of the Christ of the New Testament. The question whether Jesus was the child of adultery, may be hushed for very

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, April 1907, p. 486.

[2] e.g. Dr. Goodrich, in *The Old Faith and the New Theology*, p. 22.

reverence' sake.[1] But it is not a mere question as to the critical authenticity of 'the birth-stories.' The whole credit of the Christian Scriptures is at stake. It is not a case of an icon hung superstitiously upon an ecclesiastical tree, which may be torn off and separately broken up. It is the living member of a whole, which can only be fairly estimated when unsevered from that whole. It is curious, and surely inconsistent, that a scheme of thought which so insists upon a purely physical birth, should with equal emphasis deny a physical resurrection. But it is more than consistent, granted evidence for a really supernatural resurrection, that an equally supernatural birth should have preceded such a career as intervened. If indeed 'the Christ of the Gospels' was what He said, as well as what He seemed; if His works of healing were as really 'the finger of God' as His rising from the dead—and if they were not, the New Testament is discredited for ever—then it is more natural that such a life and character should have a supernatural origin, than that He should have been merely a Jewish child of doubtful parentage.

The usual and much-emphasized comment that such an origin would rob us of His sympathy and example, is best and sufficiently answered in the Christian Scriptures themselves. They contradict flatly enough the assertion that 'It removes Jesus altogether from the category of humanity, in any real sense.' They affirm unmistakably that the manner in which the

[1] See the *Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. xiii. 34, 39–41. I have only there stated plainly what Dr. Barrett puts with reverent reserve (*The Old Faith*, &c., p. 76). The point is, in each case alike, that such an issue must be faced.

human birth was brought to pass, as narrated, does not at all invalidate the reality of the humanity.[1] Indeed, the very essence of the miracle, Christianly considered, is that such an entrance into our life, although worthy of the pre-existent divine, yet did actually leave Christ truly human and not merely superhuman.

(iii) 'The hypostatic union.' This technical theological term is as good as any other to express the doctrine whch constitutes the remaining difficulty for modern thought, even if the manner of the birth of Jesus be left an open question. And difficulty it well may be, even as it always has been. For the union of the divine and human nature in one person is manifestly a matter for belief, not for demonstration or comprehension. No person of intelligence would, however, urge the self-contradictory proposition that we must only believe what we can understand. All that reason demands is that we should do our best to comprehend all we can, in regard to any theme, and then believe that which, though beyond our

[1] 'If I may venture to speak in the language of man concerning the Incarnation, the miracle consisted in this—that the process of development began in one cell without the intervention of the other; that really is all which we are asked to believe' (Dr. T. G. Bonney, D.Sc., F.R.S., *Christian Doctrine and Modern Thought*, p. 69).

As to the 'interference' which some minds will immediately suggest and call unscientific, the words of another equally able and impartial scientist may be in point. Said the late Mr. R. A. Proctor: 'There may not have been a single link in the whole chain of evolution which, for aught science can show to the contrary, may not have required special divine intervention to cause it to be precisely such as it was' (*Knowledge*, Feb. 23, 1883).

comprehension, is yet sufficiently commended to our acceptance. We need not go far to find instances of this. No reader knows, nor can the utmost and latest science tell him, how he reads this page intelligently. Even his own single simple human consciousness is absolutely unfathomable and indefinable. As to our commonest sensations, of what avail is it that mathematical optics tell us of the 750 millions of millions of ethereal vibrations, per second, which must pass through the cornea and crystalline lens of our eye unconsciously, and become a consciousness of the colour violet by then impinging upon the ten-layered retina behind it ? We know perfectly well that neither the optic nerve conveying the vibrations, nor the brain that receives them, can see. It is the immaterial eye, whatever that may be, which sees, by means of the material nerve and the semi-material ether. The ' hypostatic union ' is truly no more incomprehensible than this our daily human experience.

To demand, therefore, in the present case, explanation before belief, is irrational. The simplest fact in physics is ultimately as inscrutable as the highest fact in theology. The New Testament makes no attempt at explanation. It simply records facts. It is open to any objector to deny the facts, but not to reject the facts because they are incomprehensible.

Even the great Councils of the early Churches never attempted more than definition. Maybe that was too much. But whatever their faults, at least the effort showed the sincerity of their belief. Apart from the damnatory clauses, no statement could be more frank and clear than that of the so-called Athanasian

Creed. And what of the rest? At Nicaea, in A.D. 325, it was decided that Christ was truly God. At Constantinople, in 381, that He was perfectly man. At Ephesus, in 431, that He was undividedly One; at Chalcedon, in 451, that He was unconfusedly Two. These four great watchwords complete the Christian statement. What is the utmost that modern thought can rationally say against them? Putting aside all scornful vituperation, which is not rational, it can only say that they are incomprehensible. Which, if the New Testament record be true, is exactly what they ought to be, and must be. Seeing that neither the personality of God nor man, separately considered, is comprehensible, to deny the alleged blending of the two in one personality on the ground that it should be amenable to scientific definition or popular comprehension, is unworthy of any reasonable intelligence.

The only worthy query is as to whether there are any additional reasons, besides the plain facts as narrated, why these latter should be received as true in spite of their incomprehensibility.

Genuine Christianity replies that such reasons are doubly manifest, viz. in the love of God, and in the need of man. Let the doctrine of the Trinity be accepted,

[1] 'We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man—Who, although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God; one altogether; not by confusion of substance but by unity of person.' Let there be a fair comparison of this with the statements in *The New Theology*, here often quoted, and it will not be difficult to decide which most calls for Mr. W. L. Walker's exclamation (*What about the New Theology?* p. 74): 'Now see what confusion and contradiction we have here!'

not as the creation of theology but the reverent attempt on the part of human intelligence to express the eternal reality of the divine nature, and there is nothing that is inconceivable in the avowal that God the Son once shared our humanity under the limitations of genuine human nature,[1] in order to make manifest to the uttermost the actuality of the pure and pitiful love of God for mankind.

Omnipotent love can only be limited by self-contradiction. There is none such here. There is no approach to self-contradiction. It is but the undimmed radiance of infinite love when we read that 'He who was rich, for our sakes became poor,'—'He emptied Himself,' in order that He might fill the hearts of men with comfort, purity, power, and hope.

(5) The Testimony of Human Need

It has been well said that 'Religion is one thing and theology another, but religion is never found apart from a theology of some kind, for theology is the intellectual articulation of religious experience. Every man who has anything worthy to be called a religious experience has also a theology; he cannot help it.'[2] But this is just as true in the reverse. Religious experience is quite as really the creation as the creator of theology. It is easy to add that 'it is a man's

[1] As Dr. Goodrich has well said (*The Old Faith and the New Theology*, p. 19): 'Theology does not speak of the incarnation of God, but of the Son of God; philosophy speaks of the incarnation of God. The Godhead, eternal, infinite, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, was not incarnate, but the Son of God.'

[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 1.

duty to try to make his theology as nearly as possible an adequate and worthy expression of his religion.' [1] But whence is this religion to come ? From the depths of pure subjectivity, or the clouds of mere pious imagining ? To affirm that we are all incarnations of God,[2] and in all moods or acts [3] are seeking for God, is really mental, moral, and spiritual chaos in one. There is in such case neither room nor need for a gospel of any kind. Unless there be some God transcendently ' outside ' human nature, and some moral law against which we each can definitely offend, manhood is at an end, and ' salvation ' is meaningless.

But this universal and virtually sinless incarnation is as far from human experience as from New Testament teaching. In daily actuality, quite as really as on its pages, there is both need and scope for a quadruple salvation. Nothing in the whole realm of consciousness is more sure than that men as men do need, above all else, to be saved from sin, from suffering, from sorrow, and from death's hopelessness. But the religion which is to save men, must be based upon a theology which merits their credence and warrants their confidence. We are told that ' The adherent

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 1.

[2] ' All human history represents the incarnation or manifesting of the eternal Son or Christ of God. It is quite a false idea to think of Jesus and no one else as *the Son of God* incarnate ' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 108). The italics are mine.

[3] ' The man who got drunk last night and gratified his lower nature in that delirious hour, would be surprised if you were to tell him when you see the result that he was really seeking God, but so it is ' (p. 161). In very deed, so it is not. No amount whatever of printed context affects the substantial assertion here made, or redeems it from double falsity—in principle and in fact.

of the new theology tries to get *beneath* every venerable statement of Christian belief, and *bring to light* the essential truth implied in it.'[1] But there is far more implied in such a statement than truth endorses. Why this wholesale assumption that all 'venerable Christian belief' is but a dark mass of error, with light somewhere 'beneath' it? There is no real warrant for such an innuendo. 'The only theology,' it is affirmed,[2] 'that will hold the field in the immediate future, will be that of science, and science can no more contradict the findings of the highest human experience than it can deny its own method.' But if science may not contradict the human, it is even more clear that it may not limit the divine. Whatever may 'hold the field,' the theology that does not transcend science, is no theology at all. If it be in any honest sense true that

> Jesus is worthy to receive
> Honour and power divine,[3]

then, certainly, it must be beyond the scope of science to limit our apprehension of Him to its principles. God who could be reduced to a scientific formula would be merely an idol that could save no man. The religion which is to 'save' the world of men as they now more than ever need, must include not only the highest ideals, but the dynamic required to ensure their attainment. Both these are truly and amply supplied in the 'vener-

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, April 1907, p. 486. Italics mine.
[2] ib., April 1907, p. 486.
[3] *The New Theology*, p. 174. 'The Christian faith can reverently add:

> Jesus is worthy to receive
> Honour and power divine.'

able statement of Christian belief ' which regards Jesus Christ as not merely a Son of God such as we may become, but God the Son in the transcendent sense which is in regard to any human being unthinkable. This ' impassable gulf ' does not annihilate the humanity in which He is veritably our ideal. But it does involve the dynamic without which the ideal is only futile mockery. It is all put into a few glowing words by the Apostle Paul : ' I have been crucified with Christ, and I myself no longer live, but Christ liveth in me ; and the bodily life that I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.'—' I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.' [1] To ascribe such ' power divine ' to one who is simply removed from the reader in degree, is but to play fast and loose with language. It is neither true to God nor man. Such a Saviour would be equally a mockery and a blasphemy. Men do unquestionably need a ' power not ourselves that makes for righteousness,' but it must be the power of a living personality, not a pantheistic nebulosity, any more than a literary abstraction.[2]

[1] Gal. ii. 20 ; Phil. iv. 13.

[2] One greatly regrets to have to affirm that the chapter in Mr. Campbell's book entitled ' The Eternal Christ ' is, however well intended, a contradictory labyrinth of words. Apart from the suggestion of a Christian Trinity consisting of ' God, the universe, and God's operation within the universe ' (!) we find such assertions as these : ' We are justified in holding that whatever else He may be, God is essentially man, that is, He is the fount of humanity.' Because God is the fount of humanity therefore He is *essentially* man ! This is strange logic, and anthropomorphism with a vengeance. ' The idea of a Divine Man, the emanation of the Infinite, the Soul of the universe, the source and goal of humanity, is ages older than Christian theology.' Yes. But it is vastly to the credit

On the one hand, God Himself, as the transcendent Personality, is too great, too holy, too awful, too distant in His transcendence, too incomprehensible in His immanence, too inconceivable in His immensity, to be as real, as near, as tender, as our poor humanity requires. On the other hand, if men are to be in any real sense saved—remembering what moral evil means, what are the limitations and sufferings attaching to our physical life, and how bitterly resistless is death's sway—who cannot see that a true Saviour to the uttermost must be One whose sympathy is unquestionable, because based upon experience of human-life conditions; One whose power is unmeasured, so that He is able to help beyond verbal definition; One whose love is unlimited, and only for that reason is equal to the strain on patience and the demands on pity which the whole human case manifestly occasions?

of Christian theology that it corrected such a blending of confusion and contradiction. 'With what God have we to do except the God who is eternally man?' What does this mean? The theologian has just been held up to scorn for declaring that Jesus Christ 'assumed human nature, but He was eternally divine before He did so, and we are not.' Is the true doctrine, then, that Jesus was incarnate before He was incarnate? If not, assuming that we do know what 'man' stands for, what kind of God must He be who is eternally limited to the imperfections that are the very condition of manhood? One might point out much more, but the task is very unwelcome. How can such utterances as these be ever reconciled into consistent teaching?—'Jesus *is only a man*, but He is the Man of men. . . . We have never seen a Man but once. . . . Down with your metaphysics, lift the devotion of the heart, our Man to all eternity, our King, our Master, our gateway into God, *our God*' (*City Temple Sermons*, pp. 55–7). Certainly no context can cover up the self-contradiction here italicized. It is not a case for metaphysics, but for ordinary intelligence. If Jesus is only a man, it is blasphemy to hail Him as God.

Such salvation as this implies is not found in the frigid and transcendently remote 'simplicity' which Unitarianism, rejecting the Incarnation, offers in its place. Of those who are satisfied with it, we must speak and think with intellectual respect and Christian love. Their sincerity and goodness ought long ago to have shamed the uncharitableness often manifested towards them in evangelical references. Yet with unequivocal plainness it must be affirmed, that there is in their creed no mental gain to compensate for its heart deficiency. If God be God, His unity is not one whit more comprehensible on a Unitarian than on a Trinitarian basis. Whether on the lines of the New Testament or not, there is room for a thoughtful plea that in some respects[1] the conception of a divine Trinity in unity is even more credible than sheer abstract oneness. At least it is demonstrable that the Unitarian conception is not a mental triumph over the Trinitarian. They have each naturally their own difficulties, which must be left to the sincerity of their respective adherents.

But in regard to the real gospel which men need, its essence is not intellectual simplicity but spiritual reality. Words and illustrations fail alike to express the mystery of our humanity in its needs, and sins, and sorrows. Yet may we be well assured that One whom we can know and feel, whose warmth of heart is as actual, even though we cannot delineate it, as our own, is He for whose help 'the human cry' continually goes up. This we have, and only have, in the incarnate Son, of whom the writer to the Hebrews says, 'In that

[1] See *The Faith of a Christian*, cheap edition, pp. 83–96.

He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.'[1]

(6) The Special Contributions of Newest Theology

The name 'New Theology' for the movement of religious thought above referred to is not really justified,[2] nor can it be, as one of its ablest advocates acknowledges,[3] 'of more than temporary currency; it must presently be superseded by some other.' For which reason we need not adopt it. Nor is it our task here to estimate it as a whole. We simply ask, has it anything distinctively of value—especially with reference to the person and work of Christ—to contribute towards checking the modern defection from the Christian religion which it so strongly asserts?[4]

[1] We are told by the best-known advocate of the newest theology that 'This is not Unitarianism, and I do believe that Jesus was very God, as I have already shown' (*The New Theology*, p. 81). But what is this showing? Only on the preceding page the writer alleges that the deity of Jesus is a 'gratuitous assumption of which there is not a shred of evidence'; if this be not Unitarianism, what is? If the deity of Jesus is a delusion, what sense is left to attach to the phrase 'Jesus was very God'? If 'in the end God, manifest in the flesh, will be as true of every individual as ever it was of Jesus' (p. 73), then certainly Jesus was no more 'very God' than the reader is. And that is what Unitarianism has always consistently maintained.

[2] See *New Theology, its Meaning and Value*, by the present writer (R. Culley).

[3] *The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 223.

[4] 'Assuredly Christianity has for the moment lost its hold. The greatest of all causes of the drift from the Churches is the fact that Christian truth has become associated with forms of statement which thoughtful men find impossible to accept, not only on intellectual but even on moral grounds' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 8).

Every sincere and intelligent believer would gladly welcome such help in this confessedly difficult age. But whilst according all respect to the sincerity and ability of its advocates, the professed assistance to Christian faith seems rather to involve the nemesis of almost all that is most distinctively Christian. So much so, indeed, that in some cases little more is left than a mixture of Pantheism with Unitarianism.[1] After the notes on various points which have preceded, it is only necessary to point out that, in regard to the special subject of this chapter, the book which is best known and claims to be the 'first systematic statement' of this school's attitude, is anything but helpful from the standpoint of New Testament Christianity. If there be any other Christianity, it is not here contemplated.

(i) This newest theology which claims to be 'an untrammelled return to the Christian sources,' is rather a return to ancient heresies, which were far more thoroughly considered and keenly debated from the theological standpoint during the first four centuries than they are now. The light of modern thought may be taken at its best, but the working principles of the criticism which this school for the most part implicitly adopts, certainly do not constitute 'an untrammelled return to the Christian sources.' They are often very seriously trammelled by an unwarranted subjectivity, as well as by unjustifiable canons of interpretation,

[1] This must not be taken to apply to Dr. Warschauer's volume on *The New Evangel*. For while evangelical thought cannot adopt some of his main positions, the whole case is stated with such careful and scholarly moderation, that it may well be pronounced a gain to Christian thought, even by those who cannot altogether follow it.

and assertions of finality which are far from being capable of proof.

(ii) It does not by any of its seemingly 'new' suggestions really diminish the difficulties of belief, as intellectually estimated. The doctrines of immanence and incarnation here set forth, raise quite as many questions that cannot be answered as do the conceptions of evangelical belief, when fairly represented.

(iii) In regard, for instance, to the person of Christ, nothing less can be truly said, however regretfully, than that the issue of the three chapters devoted to it, in the book above mentioned, is a hopelessly confused verbal maze. No one who knows the writer will doubt either the reality of his mental culture or the purity of his motive. But when we have to come to actual printed statements, what can possibly be made, by ordinary intelligence, of the Christ who is unique and yet not unique; who is 'very God' and yet not 'deity'; who is *only* what any one of us may become, and yet One of whom it may be said 'Let us go on thinking of Jesus as Christ, the very Christ of glory'; 'Jesus *is God*,' i.e. 'He is on the throne, and the sceptre is in His hand'—'And so *are we*'; 'We can rise towards Him by trusting, loving, serving Him; and by so doing *we shall demonstrate that we too are Christ, the Eternal Son*.' Is it conceivable that assertions such as these italicized, will serve to win men of modern thought for Christian faith? With profound sorrow one is driven to say, that this type of new theology neither knows what to do with Jesus nor without Him.

(iv) Again ; its general treatment of the Christian records certainly cannot be permitted, in the light of the modern criticism which is both recent and rational but declines to follow the dictation of extremists. More especially in regard to the Fourth Gospel, as one of the sources for our true knowledge of the person of Christ, its peremptory dismissal as a historic witness is of no more avail for the avowed purpose than it is justified by any valid consensus of modern critical results.

(v) Its substitution of 'the Eternal Christ' for the pre-existent Son of God, in the full sense of deity, is pure theological imagination, unwarranted by anything in the Christian records, and as contradictory to their general attitude as irreconcilable with the acknowledged Christian conception of God at all.

(vi) To declare that 'Jesus was divine *simply and solely* because His life was never governed by any other principle than love,' is not only pure Unitarianism, if words have any meaning, but it neither does justice to Jesus nor rightly estimates the divine. To put General Booth thus on a potential level with Jesus,[1] is a comparison from which not only that good man but every other genuine Christian would shrink with strongest protest.

(vii) Such newest theology certainly does not, any more than acknowledged Unitarianism, give to the human heart that assurance of a personal Saviour which human nature most of all needs and the New Testament most of all asserts. 'Jesus the divine

[1] 'General Booth is divine in so far as this is the governing principle of his life' (p. 76).

man,' is no such Saviour; and 'the Eternal Christ,' as here represented, is but a theological mirage.

(viii) In spite of all the stress laid upon 'unselfishness' and love, as the essence of the divine, this whole representation does not supply a motive power greater than, or indeed equal to, that which issues from the throbbing heart of the Christian beliefs known as 'evangelical.' Assuming for the moment that the interpretation these latter give of Christ's person and work is true, no dynamic for human nature at once so tender and so potent is conceivable as that expressed by one who intensely exemplified it at the very outset. 'Wherefore also we make it our highest ambition, whether we live or die, to please Him perfectly. For we must all appear in our true characters before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each man may then receive the reward due to his actions in this life, just in accord with what he has done, whether it be good or bad.' [1]

On the whole, therefore, we conclude that the conception of the person, nature, mission, and influence of Jesus Christ, now for some time generally known as 'evangelical,' is both most true and most worthy. How such modern name for the doctrines involved arose, no man can say. It would perhaps be as near the truth as anything else to suggest that it sprang from some real sense of the preciousness, as

[1] 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. I know no rendering which does justice, or can in a single word do justice, to the Apostle's word φιλοτιμούμεθα, which only occurs three times in all his letters. It involves the active blending of the two strongest forces in human nature, love and honour.

good news, of the 'unspeakable gift' which it postulates. The undeniable fact that it has been associated with much 'popular' theology which has been ignorant, superficial, careless, untrue, and unworthy, no more invalidates its genuine meaning and value, than the presence of worthless dross in gold ore debases the precious metal which is therein contained. Such association calls truly, but only, for some purifying process. That process has been and is yet going on.[1] We have all much to learn, but with tender and careful deliberateness it may be said that there are two outstanding features in the true Christology of the future. These are, the practical pressure, and the humble charity, which are essential consequences of such transcendent doctrine.

If the evangelical conception of Jesus Christ be true, it is indeed staggering. James wrote,[2] 'You believe that God is one, and you are quite right; evil spirits also believe this and shudder.' If Christendom says that it believes that 'God is love,' and for love's sake 'sent His only begotten Son' to live and die for men, then it ought also both to tremble with the universal love-response which obeys to the uttermost, and to shudder at the fearful sham of a personal, social, national selfishness which practically treats such love as a lie.

If, again, such love divine be true as is exemplified in the veritable incarnation of God the Son for the saving and blessing of humanity, then there must

[1] See the booklet mentioned above, by the present writer, *New Theology, its Meaning and Value* (Robert Culley, sixpence).

[2] ch. ii. 19, Weymouth.

ever be room for the humblest, widest, tenderest charity in the interpretation of it. This the beloved disciple, having first himself experienced its transforming power,[1] has taught the Church for ever, with immeasurable emphasis. The sternest testing of the spirits must issue in this: 'Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God.' Men may differ, and differ widely, in the intellectual apprehension and estimate of Christian doctrines; but beneath all such differences, for those who believe in Christ at all, there should ever be the 'love which is the bond of perfectness.' As to this, assuredly those who believe most concerning the love of God, should also practise most the love of man.

Even sceptics who most utterly reject or scornfully trample upon what evangelical faith holds as most true and precious, are yet, from its standpoint, the objects of the very love divine it asserts. As such, they always call for tender patience—never for bitterness or bigotry. Whilst as to those who, within the pale of Christendom, earnestly advocate serious changes in theological conception, it is certainly most Christian to take the best, not the worst, of their statements as expressing the ultimate issue of the movement. Thus then speaks one of its ablest representatives.

'High above our confusion and unrest, yet near to each human heart and willing to enter in, stands He to whom the thought and feeling of mankind turns with the same instinctive fidelity with which the needle seeks the pole—the changeless Christ. Restate

[1] cf. Luke ix. 49–56, with 1 John iv. 1, 7.

our doctrines as we may, reconstruct our theologies as we will—this age, like every age, beholds in Him the Way to God, the Truth of God, the Life of God lived out among men ; this age like every age has heard and responded to His call, ' Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ' ; this age, like every age, finds access to the Father through the Son. These things no criticism can shake, these certainties no philosophy disprove, these facts no science dissolve away. He is the religion which He taught, and while the race of man endures, men will turn to the crucified Son of Man, not with a grudging ' Thou hast conquered, O Galilean ! ' but with the joyful, grateful cry, ' My Lord and my God ! ' [1]

If this be the newest theology, we may well be patient, even amidst differing interpretations, when it proclaims itself also the oldest and the truest. For upon any one of these great phrases it is open to every sincere believer to put his own mind's emphasis. And the all-embracing canon of interpretation will for ever be, that he who believes most should love most. The most transcendent theology must always demand for its justification the most exalted character.

[1] *The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 224.

V

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST— IN MODERN LIGHT

Christianity stands or falls by faith in the risen Christ, and as an historical religion it started with the belief that its Founder had revealed Himself to His disciples after the world believed Him to be dead. Whatever else these first Christians believed, they unquestionably believed in the empty tomb, and their whole theory of the nature of the universe was the principal cause of their doing so. But let me state here with perfect frankness that I feel convinced they must have had some further cause for doing so. They really must have seen Jesus. I do not care in what way you try to account for their belief. It is as certain as anything can be that the humble heroes who first proclaimed the gospel of Jesus to mankind, were justified in declaring that they had received their commission from His own lips, after cruel priests and ignorant fanatics believed that they had silenced Him for ever. I believe they were right. Nothing less can explain what they did then, or what the name of Jesus is doing even now.

R. J. Campbell, *New Theology Sermons*, pp. 17, 23, 24.

V

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST—IN MODERN LIGHT

'If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain.'—1 Cor. xv. 12, 19.

No words should be required to emphasize the importance, for the Christian faith, of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Taken in all its significance and connexion with the foregoing, nothing less can be said than that by it, as truly as by the doctrine of the Person of Christ, Christianity stands or falls. There has been a tendency, it must be confessed, in some sections of the evangelical Church to refer to the Cross of Christ as the 'central doctrine of Christianity,' and correspondingly to ignore the Resurrection. But it has always been a popular, not a theological attitude, and need not here concern us. The New Testament is its own witness that the most intense emphasis which can possibly fall upon the Crucifixion, is that derived from the reality of the Resurrection.

In attempting, however, to state in modern terms the essentials of Christian belief, it is still necessary to make quite clear the supreme importance of this doctrine. For it is only then that any valid apprehension

can be formed of the cleavage between genuine Christian faith, and, on the one hand, the absolutely anti-Christian position which rejects the whole thesis as but a credulous superstition, and on the other hand, the neo-Christian naturalism which whittles away its main features until only a residuum of normal human psychology is left. Thanks to a cheap press, both these attitudes are to-day much more widely known and adopted than ever before, so that although everything of any moment has been frankly faced by Christian advocates,[1] no other course appears open than the perpetual restatement of the reasons why, in face of all the criticism and opposition, so many still retain their convictions, alike unashamed and thankful.

For the moment we will keep two things entirely separate, viz. the reality and the nature of the Resurrection. As to the former, all who make any serious claim to the Christian name are agreed.[2] This

[1] An instructive list of noteworthy publications will be found on p. 353 of this volume. The whole case as against unbelief in general is summarized by the present writer in *The Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. 135–51, whilst all that really calls for consideration in the position of the newest theology was forcibly stated by Dr. E. A. Abbott more than twenty years ago, and is carefully scrutinized in the same work on pp. 155–73. As for the special admixture of plausibility and confidence recently made popular in such works as *God and my Neighbour*—e.g. 'Christians are fond of saying that the Resurrection is one of the best attested facts in history. I hold that the evidence for the Resurrection would not be listened to in a court of law, and is quite inadmissible in a court of cool and impartial reason'—it is sufficiently dealt with in *Clarion Fallacies*, pp. 123–32.

[2] Thus in the best-known book on the 'new theology,' Mr. Campbell says, 'I hope we can take for granted the broad fact that without a belief in a Resurrection of some kind, Christianity could never have made a start at all' (p. 218). And Dr. Warschauer (*The New Evangel*,

reality, however, involves both the historic and supernatural elements to an extent that modern naturalism, agnosticism, and secularism, strenuously deny. The attitude, therefore, taken by these latter, first merits attention.

(1) The Vast Importance

The supreme significance of the fact alleged, viz. that the very same Jesus who was crucified did, immediately after, give unmistakable assurance to His disciples that He was living, is clearly manifest from the following considerations.

(i) His own truthfulness is unequivocally pledged to such an extent. Assuming only, as intimated in the preceding chapter, the substantial reliability of our Gospels, His assertions hereupon are yet too plain to be misunderstood, too oft-repeated to be overlooked. Unless the Resurrection really came to pass, only three possible lines of thought present themselves. (1) Our records are altogether misleading, so that we know positively nothing of what Jesus really said or did. Or, (2) He was a self-deluded though pious fanatic. Or, (3) He was consciously a deceiver. It matters nothing which of these suggestions be adopted. In each case alike, Christianity falls to the ground.

(ii) It is no less sure that the preaching and teaching of the apostles were similarly committed to a real

p. 189) writes: 'We have already expressed our belief that in some direct and unmistakable manner the assurance was conveyed to His disciples that this wonderful life, because it was life indeed, could not be holden of the grave, had triumphed over death.'

resurrection. This was, indeed, their double, flagrant, intolerable offence. The whole New Testament, apart from the Gospels, testifies that everywhere unfalteringly they preached 'Jesus and the Resurrection.' This naturally and especially incensed the Jews, who clearly saw that hence was ratified the divinity of the Crucified One, and thus also manifested the enormity of their sin in rejecting Him. The notion, moreover, of the real resurrection of one who had died a human death, provoked the haughty contempt of the Roman into hostility, and staggered the Greeks, in spite of their dim wonderings about the immortality of the soul. Thus there arose, at once and on all hands, the bitter opposition and cruel persecutions which so fiercely assaulted the early Churches. To this general attitude all the apostolic writings are so entirely pledged, that without the reality of the Resurrection they become as meaningless as unreliable. Direct and emphatic assertion, indirect reference, constant assumption, all bear witness to the unquestionable belief of all the primitive Christians that their Lord was He who had 'risen from the dead.'

(iii) So sure were the early disciples of this real Resurrection, that under the special guidance of the apostles—who themselves herein followed Christ—they sought and found, in the Old Testament, reasons for confirming their belief. It is confessedly difficult for our modern eyes to see these grounds for faith as plainly as we are told the Bereans did. But be that as it may, the fact with which we are here concerned, is the strength of the conviction of the first disciples that not only was Jesus risen, but that even the Old

Covenant contemplated such an issue when the true Messiah came.

(iv) The whole philosophy of Christianity also demands a real resurrection. Keim's saying that 'Christianity was "built upon an empty tomb,"' may be both understood and misunderstood. As a mere negative it is untrue. But it becomes true through what it connotes. The solidarity of Christian doctrine cannot be easily expressed in a few words. Yet such an epigram points to a great and oft-neglected truth. Even as the normal functioning of any one of the vital parts of the human body implies that all the rest are similarly doing their part, if the health of the whole is really maintained, so the unmistakable essentials of genuine Christian faith assume and confirm each other. The days when Thomists and Scotists discussed the relative importance of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, are gone for ever. But such mistaken waste of energy is repeated in all inquiries as to whether the Crucifixion or the Resurrection is the 'central' truth of Christianity. It would be as appropriate to dispute whether the centre, or the circumference, or the radius, was the essential part of a circle.

It has been well said that 'Until we have received the impression from the gospel of Christ's moral supremacy, of the unshared relation to the Father to which His inmost consciousness testified, and of the correspondence between His unique personal experience, and His unique claim to be the mediator of a new life of sonship to others, the Resurrection will seem but an idle tale.[1] All the same, such an 'impression' would

[1] *The Christ of History and of Experience*, Dr. Forrest, p. 158.

be valueless, because unreliable, without the objective certainty of the Resurrection. Without it no doctrine of Incarnation or of Atonement—as conceived in the New Testament—would be of avail. According to true Christian philosophy it is the Incarnation which confers value upon the Atonement; whilst both together point to and explain the very Resurrection which in turn confirms and completes them. And this is no more arguing in a circle than is the scientific recognition of the mutually dependent vital parts of the scarcely less wonderful human body.

(v) The whole credibility of the miraculous element in the Gospels, stands or falls with the actuality of the Resurrection. Setting aside the superficial plausibility which says 'We have ceased to believe in miracles,'[1] we have undoubtedly to do with a modern world which looks askance at the supernatural in any form, and is disposed to scrutinize the evidence alleged for miracles more critically than ever before.[2] To this the rational believer will offer no objection whatever. But so

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 97. The writer further informs his readers that 'Science has made the belief in miracles impossible.' Whereas science has certainly done nothing of the kind. To this, even such an impartial thinker as Prof. Huxley bore sufficient testimony.

[2] It is to the credit of the newest theology that its exponents do not follow the wild assertion quoted in the previous note. Thus Dr. Warschauer specially protests against such a notion being imputed to the school of thought he represents. Quoting an opponent who writes, 'If we assume at the threshold of Gospel study that everything in the nature of miracle is impossible,' he replies, 'Who does assume anything of the kind? Professor Schmiedel, one of the sceptical critics referred to, says explicitly, "The present examination of the subject will not start from the proposition that miracles are impossible"' (*The New Evangel*, p. 168).

long as the evidence for the Resurrection suffices to warrant our belief in it, as a real event, there can be no *a priori* objection to the presence and action of the supernatural as exhibited in other miracles. All onslaughts upon these are, in such case, wasted effort. If the greatest with all its consequences be conceded as true, there is no sufficient reason for shrinking from the lesser. In all their interest and meaning, other miracles become then matters for ordinary testimony. On the other hand, whatever may be their evidential value, if the Resurrection be proved false, Christianity must totter to its fall. It is, however, quite irrelevant to turn to mythology and ransack its weird pages for a parallel to the Resurrection. The discovery of the previous conception of a resurrection proves nothing. It is not a resurrection, but the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which is in question. That which must first be found is a parallel to Jesus Himself. Meanwhile, if His resurrection is commended to our credence on rational grounds, other beliefs no more invalidate it than the shining of the moon disproves the light of the sun.

(vi) When we come to practical matters, the vast significance of Christ's Resurrection is equally manifest. The universal assembling of Christians for worship on the first day of the week, from apostolic times until now, depends entirely for its sanction and promise upon the reality of this great event. In religious parlance, certainly, we hear of the 'Sabbath' and of 'Sunday.' But both of these names are, for the Christian, as unwarranted as meaningless. That which the Emperor Constantine was pleased to decree, for political

ends, in A.D. 321, has no more authority for the Christian mind than it has inspiration. So too in regard to what is called 'the fourth commandment.' It is read occasionally in Christian services, with all its bidding to keep holy the seventh day in strict Jewish fashion. But no one in the Christian Churches who hears it, keeps it, or indeed thinks of keeping it. He keeps another day, in an entirely different spirit. Waiving for the moment the manifest inconsistency of this, it is here sufficient to point out that the only conceivable warrant for thus deliberately transgressing the positive command of the older Covenant, is that whole teaching and work of Jesus Himself which found its culmination in the Cross, and its confirmation in the real Resurrection. Rightly, for such reason, did the early Church—believing the latter to be every whit as real as and even more important than the former—come by universal consent to celebrate on 'the Lord's day,' the first day of the week, the august events which changed the whole current of their faith and gave them their new hope. We do well to follow them in commemorating our earth's greatest tragedy and triumph. But it would be all tragedy without triumph, if Jesus had not veritably risen from the dead. There would in that case be no New Covenant, and the Christian sacred day would have neither Jewish nor Pagan warrant.

(vii) Even more serious, however, than this is the consideration that, on any day, Christian worship would have no sanction unless Christ be the risen Saviour. 'If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it,' is the substance of the promises variously attri-

buted to Him. Relying on such assurance, the very watchword of Christian devotion has come to be 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.' But to what does this commit the worshipper? Can men pray, either rationally or reverently, in the name of a mere disappointed reformer, a helpless idealist done to death by a godless power at the behest of religious formalists? The whole moral sense revolts at such a suggestion. Yet nothing else is before us, if He be not risen again. By His own direction, no less than by the developed practice of the Church, Christians dismiss altogether the rites and ordinances of the Old Dispensation. But if the New be invalidated by a fundamental delusion, only 'vain repetition' is left. Every prayer, no matter how fervent or sincere, then becomes the mere subjectivity its opponents allege. Words of supplication in that case are but clouds of pious dust, which fall back upon us as we lift our eyes to Heaven, and smother our faith in despairing uselessness.

Faith.

(viii) Nor is this all. The apostolic assertion quoted above is yet broader and deeper in its connotation. 'Your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.' That is, certainly, unless Christ be verily the risen Lord, all Christian 'experience' is but self-delusion. Much stress is often laid to-day upon 'the argument from experience.' But without a corresponding and valid objectivity, it proves nothing for any one. The Buddhist, the Theosophist, the Mussulman, the Swedenborgian, the Jesuit, the Shintoist, the Thug, each claims, upon strongest grounds of personal conviction, to be possessed of the truth. What guarantee, then, has the Christian that his 'experience' is anything

more than one of the many varieties of religious imagination? How does he know, or how can he show, that his alleged forgiveness, acceptance with God, peace, spiritual power, are more than phantasms of the mind? Only by reference to the reality of the supreme fact everywhere and always asserted by the apostles. 'This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.' Then, but only then, is there room for the assurance, 'Wherefore also He is able to save them to the uttermost that draw near unto God through Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

(ix) Yet further. Experience that does not issue in character, is as untrue to the Christian ideal as useless for Christian purposes. 'He that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God and approved of men.' But the very conception of serving Christ, assumes that He is the living Lord whom death could not hold. The loving service of either a dead teacher or his memory, is, in this connexion, altogether unthinkable. Christian character ought, according to all New Testament doctrine, to culminate in holiness. But the very essence of real holiness, as a Christian ideal, is found in Christ's own words: 'Abide in Me, and I in you.' Yet no amount of mystic subjectivity could make such words applicable, if He who uttered them had simply remained the murdered victim of priestly hate, whose body rotted in its grave. Manifestly, if the Resurrection be not true, there is an end to all the holy impulse that comes from the recognition of a living Lord. The restraint from wrong, the stimulus to right, which continually spring from remembrance of

His tender but severe scrutiny, must then for ever cease. The Christianity, however, which lacks these, can only be for human nature as the salt that has 'lost its savour,' and is 'thenceforth good for nothing.'

(x) Last, though by no means least, upon the reality of Christ's Resurrection depends the validity of our own hope of blessed immortality. As we shall have presently to consider this whole theme, it is only necessary here to mark the contrast between the calm certainty of the Christian hope, as expressed in Christ's well-known words,[1] and the pathetic gropings of the human heart when only aided by the perplexed guessings of philosophy and the dim hints of science. The best-known advocate of the latest theology thinks that 'probably before very long it will be impossible to deny the persistence of individual consciousness after death.'[2] But that alone is far too nebulous to yield much comfort or hope to mortals, and there is not a little to be said on the other side.

It may be noted that one of the most thoughtful of modern Christian teachers has preferred to put it thus: 'It is better to say we believe in immortality because we believe in God; and because we believe in immortality we find it possible to believe that the Son of God may have appeared to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead.'[3] But here we may surely apply the words of another writer of the 'new theology' who well and truly says, 'It is God's character, His love made manifest in Christ, which assures us that

[1] John xiv. 1–3.
[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 230.
[3] Dr. H. Rashdall, *Doctrine and Development*, p. 181.

the grave is not a blind alley but a door, not an end but a beginning.' [1]

Whence, however, do we get the sublime characterization of the divine upon which all else depends—' God is love '—but from the Christ of the Gospels? Yet unless He be veritably risen from the dead, His message to humanity perishes with Him. Then ' they which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished—we are of all men most to be pitied.' These, and the other strong words in the apostle's letter to the Corinthians, are well known throughout the Christian world. It is small wonder that reverent emphasis falls upon them. For granted only the writer's assumption of the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus, and we have both prophecy and pledge of our own life beyond the grave, in such association as makes our very ignorance of details an inspiration. If He, our Lord, be risen indeed, our new life, our heaven is sure. If He be not risen, all that science can suggest, or philosophy infer, or psychical research affirm, leaves us but guessing in the dark.

> So runs my dream. But what am I?
> An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry.

Better that, maybe, than brute indifference. But measurelessly better still to have a ' hope that maketh not ashamed,' by reason of the knowledge that He whom we rightly call Master and Lord has not only faced death with us and for us, but so triumphed over it as to become the living proof that for us also ' to die is

[1] Dr. Warschauer, *The New Evangel*, p. 212.

gain.' The scientific problems said to be involved herein will be considered in due course. There is nothing to blush for, in the fiercest light of our modern scrutinizing, when we accept the apostolic assurance that 'the Lord Jesus Christ in the exercise of the power which He has even to subject all things to Himself, will transform this body of our humiliation until it resembles His own glorious body.'[1] Manifestly it was the resurrection-body of Jesus which the writer had in mind. Its mystery we freely own, as Christian believers, no honest exegesis can solve. But that is no rational stumbling-block to intelligent faith. When, indeed, it is taken as it ought to be, in organic connexion with all else which shows how Christ was more and other than ordinary men, such a result from His encounter with death appears rather natural than supernatural. At all events the men of science and philosophy to-day ought to be the last to sneer, or even quibble, for they know well that, be the mystery of the resurrection-body of Jesus what it may, it is no more unscientific, or inconceivable, or inexplicable, than the process of an ordinary mind by which the reader apprehends the significance of these printed lines. The least scientific and rational of all modern attitudes is that which takes upon itself to say what 'physically' must be, and what cannot be, in the universe of God.[2]

[1] Phil. iii. 21, Weymouth.

[2] By interesting coincidence, as these lines are written, to-day's paper comes to hand with an article on 'The People of Mars,' closing with these words: 'There is nothing incredible about life on Mars, because there is nothing incredible about any monstrous or incalculable change in a universe where man's knowledge is merely the swinging of a plumb-line in an unfathomed deep.'

To appreciate aright the significance of the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, all the foregoing truths, integral in themselves, have to be combined. To their total import words cannot do justice. It is strange indeed that even in Christian Churches there are yet many who fail to apprehend this.[1]

If, to sum up the whole case in careful succinctness, the test of the truth or falsehood of our whole Christian hopes be here; if this ultimately decides whether Christianity is a revelation or a delusion; if thus only we get unimpeachable answer to our heart's impassioned query—'Shall we after all die as dogs, or live as the children of the Eternal Father?'—if this greatest of events alone makes sure that Christ was not a mere pious enthusiast whose bones have long since mouldered away in some Syrian grave, but 'the Son of God with power'; if, in one word, God and Christ, and the soul, and holiness, and heaven, be on the one side, and on the other mere force, law, necessity, life's struggle for nothing, with the choice betwixt the two turning upon the truth or falsity of this same Resurrection,—ought humanity to need exhortation to face the question of questions—Is it true? Rather it would seem

[1] Thus in the recently issued volume entitled *The Old Faith and the New Theology*, which is presumably intended to be a setting forth of the essentials of genuine Christianity, no mention at all is made of the Resurrection of Jesus—as if it were an open or an insignificant question. Dr. Horton has indeed a suggestive paper on 'The Holy Spirit in Scripture and Experience.' But if there be any truth in the Fourth Gospel, to say nothing about the rest of the New Testament, apart from the real Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, there is neither any doctrine of the Holy Spirit for Christian theology, nor any validity in Christian 'experience.

REV. ALFRED M. KUDER

that every man of intelligence and sincerity should press home such an inquiry, with the very utmost candour and caution, honesty and thoroughness, of which he is capable.

(2) Is it True?

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Is the alleged Resurrection historically true? That is the question—and there is no greater for mortal men—which now demands answer, without evasion and without equivocation. The mere sneerer who has settled everything beforehand by the magisterial declaration that science has made such an event impossible of belief, may be left out of account. The appeal here is to men of reason and sincerity. Not that in a few pages a theme which has received most thorough attention in many volumes can be finally settled, but that enough may be put into clear synopsis to show how far Christians are from following cunningly devised fables, or blundering mythologies, when they believe and teach that 'Christ is risen indeed.'

There is no need for discussion as to the actual belief of the first preachers of Christianity. The most pronounced sceptics concede this. Dismissing as unworthy of serious regard the unwarrantable questionings of some extremists in regard to the historicity of Jesus and the apostles,[1] the attitude of the modern

[1] To what has been mentioned above may be added the following choice instance of what is to-day cheaply served up for popular consumption. In *God and my Neighbour* (p. 91) we read: 'There is no genuine historical evidence outside the New Testament that such

criticism which is at once severe and sane, is expressed by Mr. W. R. Greg. 'It seems to us certain that the apostles believed in the Resurrection of Jesus with absolute conviction. Nothing short of such belief could have sustained them through what they had to endure, or given them enthusiasm for what they had to do. The question, therefore, which remains for our decision is whether the apostles could have believed it had it not been fact.' [1]

The problem at issue could scarcely be better stated. Save that for us it has become more complex through historical research, whilst the difficulties of belief are generally accentuated by our acquaintance with physical science. To go back nineteen centuries is confessedly a long, long retrospect. The most dilapidated old relic of Norman architecture marks less than half-way. The resistlessness of death and the reign of law have meanwhile gathered such weight, that the stone rolled to the mouth of the cave was a trifle compared with the avalanche of difficulty which is now said to have fallen in the path of faith.

The Christian believer, however, has no grudge against any honest and thoughtful objections, because the more serious they are, the more weighty is the truth which overcomes them. True faith is but the projection of the highest reason. It is heartily con-

men as Paul, Peter, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, ever existed. Many critics and scholars deny the existence of Peter and Paul. There is no trustworthy evidence to oppose to that conclusion.' This fair specimen of the shallow dogmatism of some Agnosticism, is sufficiently dealt with in *Clarion Fallacies*, by the present writer, pp. 106–180.

[1] *The Creed of Christendom*, pp. 33, 154.

ceded that the more strange and important an assertion, the more legitimate is the demand for special evidence. When, indeed, it is said that no amount of evidence could substantiate an assertion of a supernatural event, it is plain that science and philosophy have been forsaken for prejudice and pre-determination. Such an attitude we must here leave out of account.

Whether they be supernatural or natural, it is beyond controversy that we have in the great matter before us to deal with undoubted facts, for which adequate cause must be found, if we are to remain rational.[1] The simplest and at the same time strongest Christian argument, is that for all these facts the real Resurrection is a natural and sufficient cause, and that apart from this there is no other. An enormous sphere revolving somewhere with mighty momentum, but without any centre, and without any moving force, involves less contradiction than is contained in the suggestion that Christianity could have sprung into existence and developed into what followed without a risen, living Christ.[2]

Four main matters thus claim our best attention, in regard to the actuality of the event upon which the early Christians staked everything.

[1] cf. again the words of Professor Wilkins on p. 128.

[2] This is written in full view of the latest shifts of unbelief. It is not a little significant how these become year by year more desperate. The latest discovery from Germany (*The Rise of Christianity*, by A. Kalthoff, translated by Mr. Jos. McCabe), is 'that Christianity should be regarded as a particular development of social life, and not as the work of a personal founder of a religion; that the rise and character of Christianity should not be sought in the historical Jesus whom liberal theologians put at the commencement of the system.'

(1) Facts which are, or ought to be, beyond dispute.

(2) The consensus of historic testimony as to the alleged cause.

(3) The inevitable consequences of rejecting that cause.

(4) The naturalness of the supernatural element involved.

(1) *Facts*

Here, for certainty's sake, we start with the ground beneath our feet. The globe on which our lot is cast is not more real, and does not more really demand an adequate cause for its existence and continuance, than does that faith which is to-day greatest, alike in numbers and in influence, of all religions known to men.[1] The policy of unbelief, we know, is to use every opportunity to proclaim Christianity to be a dying faith. The assertion is none the less false. Changes in modern religious forms of thought do but testify to the indestructible and irrepressible vitality of underlying convictions. Impossible it may be to accurately estimate the number of real Christians, and it would doubtless be untrue to represent all Christendom as genuine in its belief. Yet the following avowals may be deliberately and truthfully made.

(i) The strongest and most advanced nations of the world are at the present time those most imbued with avowedly Christian influences. 'Japan,' which will

[1] As the militant Agnostic will at once challenge this statement the reader is referred to *Haeckel's Monism False*, pp. 541–55; also *Clarion Fallacies*, p. 174. For the truthfulness of these I am responsible, but there are plenty of other reliable estimates to the same effect.

of course be immediately shouted by the anti-Christian cynic of to-day, is by no means such an easy theme as he would make it. Space here compels contentment with the estimate of an expert.[1] 'Even in Japan, Christianity unwrapped from its foreign mould and matting, will cease being an exotic and strike its roots deep in the soil on which Bushido has grown. Stripped alike of its swaddling bands and its foreign regimentals, the Church of the Founder will be as native as the air.' That Protestantism is more progressive than Romanism, needs no discussing. But whichever religious form be followed, it is plain that the world of humanity would have to be wholly submerged in order to drown out Christian thought and speech, ideal and action.[2]

(ii) There were never in the world's history so many

[1] Mr. W. E. Griffis, in his introduction to Prof. Nitobé's fascinating little book entitled *Bushido, the Soul of Japan*, p. xxv., also pp. 186, 190, 191.

[2] Here impartial testimony may be taken from Mr. R. Blatchford, who complains (*God and my Neighbour*, p. 149), that 'The Christians have virtual command of all the churches, universities, and schools. They have the countenance and support of the thrones, parliaments, cabinets, and aristocracies of the world, and they have the nominal support of the world's newspaper press. They have behind them the tradition of eighteen centuries. They have formidable allies in the shape of whole schools of philosophy, and whole libraries of eloquence and learning. They have the zealous service and unswerving credence of millions of honest and worthy citizens; and they are defended by solid ramparts of prejudice and sentiment, and obstinate old custom.' This is an interesting picture from a writer who asserts that 'The Christian religion is untrue from end to end, from bottom to top. It has not a solid reason to stand upon.' To put these two estimates together, is to leave the well-known verdict of Carlyle concerning the population of these islands quite in the shade.

genuine and earnest Christians as to-day; and their number is continually increasing.[1]

(iii) Throughout Christendom, as a whole, there is a nearer approach to the mind of Christ, in sympathy and in charity, than ever since the very earliest Christian days. The gross superstitions and cruel persecutions which have stained the past are no longer possible. Even the bigotry and petty persecutions which yet sometimes occur, have to do their mischief in secret, and blush for very shame when exposed to publicity.

(iv) Christian ethics, as enforced in the New Testament, stand out, as the result of the fierce light thrown upon them, more nobly than ever. The estimate of Strauss, quoted above,[2] is thrown up into relief. And we have the deliberate testimony of an impartial and erudite Professor of modern history that, with all their faults, the Churches yet constitute 'the moral university of the world—the only institution which is distinctively and deliberately a virtue-making institution, and the one which inherits the most complete ideal of virtue.'[3] Whether men sneer at Christian holiness or not, the fact remains that if only in the New Testament sense men were holy, there would be an end at one stroke of the evils that corrupt human society, and a solution of almost all the problems of sociology, with the final dismissal of war and all its woes.

(v) The Christian promise of immortality, however variously interpreted, is yet the only thought of the *post mortem* future which brings to modern men, in

[1] See *Clarion Fallacies*, p. 193; *Haeckel's Monism False*, pp. 541–55.

[2] See pp. 123, 131.

[3] *Ecce Homo*, by Prof. Seeley, 1903 edition, p. xx.

the nations that rule the world, anything like genuine comfort or hope worth cherishing.

(vi) Altogether, viewing Christianity steadily and viewing it whole, it is true to say that it is the mightiest force, and the noblest, that has ever operated in the world of humanity. It retains such supremacy until this hour. Every bitter malediction hurled at it is misdirected. For as Professor Seeley well said, 'The abuses and corruptions of the Church, however gross, are no arguments against the utility of the institution, unless they can be shown to be inseparable from it.' As to this the New Testament testifies with yet greater emphasis. Its own anathemas are more severe than any Continental or Socialistic diatribes, against those who in its name substitute words for deeds, or hate for love.

Much more than this might be and ought to be said on behalf of Christian reality throughout the world. Here, however, is enough to indicate the rest, and to show how vast and solid is the mass of fact for which, in the name of human reason, adequate cause is demanded. The duty of the truth-seeker is to trace back to its source, step by step, this world-wide, indestructible, irresistible potency. The pathway of the past, we know, is often black and barren, so that the trail is sometimes apparently lost. Yet ultimately there is no possibility of mistaking it. Everything connected with Christianity that is great and good, blessed and mighty,[1] is traceable back to a small band of men of

[1] That such epithets are not misplaced, so competent a witness as Goethe may be quoted to show, seeing that he is reported to have said in his *Conversations with Eckermann* (p. 568): 'Let mental

humble origin, belonging to a despised nation, in an obscure province of the Roman empire, during the reign of Tiberius.

(2) *The Consensus of Testimony*

Omitting the details of church history, which are here irrelevant, we are brought back in thought[1] to the starting-point of the Christian faith, and have to find an adequate explanation of its origin, growth, and vitality.

(i) We turn instinctively to the New Testament. Why should we not do so? It may well be repeated, in addition to hints on preceding pages, that the earnest and cultured thought of to-day is not bound to accept the subjectivity of the extreme critical school which would dismiss the Gospels and Epistles *en bloc* as an 'incongruous and contradictory collection of traditions,' or echo the 'liberal' theologians who would find only a few if any of the sayings of Jesus authentic. But waiving for the moment the witness of the Gospels, we will turn to the four great letters of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. The genuineness

culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences progress in ever greater extent and depth, and the human mind widen itself as much as it desires—beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it shines forth in the Gospels, it will not go.' Goethe, it will be remembered, is Haeckel's favourite poet for atheistic or pantheistic Monism.

[1] The historical connexion is well traced in popular style by Thomas Cooper, in his excellent little book (which may now be purchased for sixpence), *The Bridge of History over the Gulf of Time.* This is still, as truly as when first published thirty years ago, sufficient reply to the bizarre assertions of to-day concerning the historicity of Jesus and His apostles.

of these we have seen to be pronounced, by such thorough-going critics as Drs. Schmiedel and Neumann, 'unassailable.' The few peculiar dissentients to such a general critical conviction may here be left unnoticed. Renan's estimate remains true for this generation no less than his own, when he says that these letters 'possess absolute authenticity, thorough sincerity, and freedom from legendary corruption.'

(ii) The early date of these letters may also be considered as put now beyond all reasonable doubt. If we say that Galatians was written in A.D. 56, Corinthians in 57, Romans in 58, we shall be well warranted by latest knowledge.[1] Renan's findings again hold good. These Epistles, 'dictated for the most part from the year 53 to about 62, are replete with information concerning the first years of Christianity.' The latest of these, therefore, appeared not more than thirty years after the Crucifixion. The earliest (1 Thessalonians) is accepted by almost all the best scholarship as having been written some four or five years sooner.[2]

(iii) Here, then, we have manifold and weighty witness to the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus. For not only do the writer's words express his own conviction, but he takes for granted, without argument, that all the converts at Thessalonica perfectly agree with him. Hence the reference, all the more reliable for being incidental, to 'His Son from heaven, whom

[1] It is, however, worthy of note that some scholars, of the calibre of Harnack, Ramsay, McGiffert, and Clemen, are disposed to put these dates about five years earlier.

[2] Harnack, McGiffert, and Clemen, think nearly ten years earlier.

He raised from the dead, even Jesus '—'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.'[1] And this, in face of all surrounding opposition and criticism, within, at the most, twenty-five years of the Crucifixion. The brevity of such a period can surely be appreciated by every sincere reader of these words.

(iv) But that which is true for the Church at Thessalonica is, we cannot but see, equally so for the other Churches in Galatia, at Corinth, and at Rome. Quotation is here quite unnecessary. To take out of these Pauline letters the actuality of Christ's Resurrection, would be equivalent to taking the spine out of the human body. It is, moreover, to be specially observed that here also we have not merely the reiterated avowal of the writer himself, but the assumed endorsement of it without dispute by all the Christians in all these Churches. The witness to the reality of the great event is thus unequivocal and unanimous. So much so that the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus is used both as argument and illustration, in connexion with other debatable matters. Here also each locality comes into consideration, as well as the time. The date is thirty years only after the Crucifixion. The places, as any map in a moment shows, are such as virtually to represent the world of that day. London, Paris, Berlin, would not more fairly represent the world of modern thought.

(v) There is, however, another portion of the New Testament, which bears unmistakable testimony, known as 'The Acts of the Apostles.' Is there any valid reason why we should not give heed to it? Let us

[1] 1 Thess. i. 10, iv. 14.

say, in point-blank deliberateness, there is not.[1] When, after the most careful scrutiny, a scholar such as Professor W. M. Ramsay estimates the author of the Acts as 'among the historians of the first rank,'[2] the plain man may accept its unequivocal testimony on main matters without misgiving. Such witness most certainly is afforded in regard to the Resurrection, by the way in which, at all times and on all occasions, this is represented as the very reason and substance of the gospel message. The degree to which its testimony is confirmed by the unquestionable testimony of Paul's acknowledged letters, will only be appreciated by those who have examined the instances set forth by Paley in his well-known *Horae Paulinae*.[3]

(vi) But it is time to make pertinent inquiry concerning the leading figure in the whole movement. Who and what is this Paul, that his letters should be thus 'weighty and strong,'[4] as well as his preaching

[1] This is not of course the place to discuss so large a question, but the reader will find a succinct and clear statement of the modern case in Dr. Moffat's *Historical New Testament*, pp. 412–19. The writer's known and scholarly thoroughness adds worth to his conclusion that 'As a historical document, not merely for the period 75–100, but even for some points in the age of which it treats, Acts is a most serviceable and invaluable writing.'

[2] See also *The Apostolic Age*, by Dr. Vernon Bartlet, pp. viii-xi.

[3] More than fifty years ago, in the Preface to this work, it was said: 'No candid reader, after a perusal of the work, can escape the full conviction that the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul, forming together nearly one half of the New Testament, could neither be the result of fraud on the part of contemporary authors, nor have an artificial origin in later times, but are certainly what they bear upon their face, a genuine history, and authentic letters of the great apostle of the Gentiles.' Modern criticism has done really nothing to invalidate such an estimate.

[4] 2 Cor. x. 10.

so effective? The answer to such a question is best given still in Lord Lyttleton's monograph, to which we must here be content to refer.[1] It comes in a word to this, that nothing else and nothing less than the real Resurrection of Jesus supplies the adequate cause for such a psychological phenomenon as the facts of his case present. The Christian plea based hereupon may be soberly pronounced unanswered and unanswerable.

(vii) But an even greater problem than Paul's conversion demands solution, viz. the conversion of all the other apostles. For such undoubtedly had taken place, according to the narratives whose substantial truthfulness we are warranted in assuming. The last vision we have of them on the memorable night of the great tragedy, is in the honest if shameful record, 'Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.' What, then, is this phenomenon and its explanation, that suddenly, yet unquestionably, this feeble company of dull, selfish, craven-hearted followers, who execute a cowardly *sauve qui peut* and leave their Master to His fate, should be thus transformed? For we find them, now, convinced of their unbelief, ashamed of their fear, forgetful of themselves, defiant of all opposition, triumphant in the assurance that they may and must go forth to preach everywhere to Jew, Greek, Roman, alike, the gospel of mercy and hope guaranteed by a risen Saviour! Grant the actuality of the Resurrection of their Master, with its immeasurable impression on mind and heart, and its unparalleled

[1] Especially as now published by the Religious Tract Society, with an introductory essay by the late Prof. Henry Rogers.

stimulus to their moral nature, and there is a rational and sufficient explanation. But deny this, and what other is even plausible, let alone valid ?

(viii) For it must be by no means overlooked that as a matter of indubitable fact, the new and startling doctrine of 'Jesus and the Resurrection,' was first preached in Jerusalem, i.e. in the very place where the Resurrection was alleged to have happened, and where, certainly, the Crucifixion had taken place. Nor was there any delay which would allow time for the concoction of a united scheme. At once, and on the spot, the very men who had only just before slunk away into the dark, bewildered, trembling with fear, brokenhearted, hopeless concerning Him whom they had really loved but never understood, now stand forth, clear-minded and strong-hearted, challenging contradiction from the very murderers of their Master, and setting at nought the bitter opposition of the leaders of their national religion no less than the weighty threats of the imperial authorities ! This is scarcely the way in which fraud is promulgated. As for a mere delusion, could any surer way have been devised for its exposure ?

(ix) But this was only the beginning. As a stone dropped into a pool sends from the centre ripples to the edge, so beyond question did both the apostles and, in almost every case, the new converts, spread abroad from the holy city in all directions, carrying with them everywhere the gospel they so enthusiastically held. And its very soul and substance was that the once crucified Jesus was really risen from the dead, and after unquestionable communion with them had visibly

ascended from their midst. No scoffs, no scorn, no blandishment, no persecution, made the slightest difference to their conviction, or diminished the zeal with which they sought to impart it to others.

(x) Thus it came to pass that within less than ten years of the Crucifixion, there was a wide-spread network of Christian churches, all the members of which, without exception, received Christ's Resurrection as entirely true, and made it the veritable ground of their existence, as well as the reason of all their activities.

(xi) There is, moreover, no valid reason for gainsaying the assertion of Paul, in his undoubted letter to the Corinthians, that at the time of his writing, five-and-twenty years after the Crucifixion, there were known to him to be living more than two hundred and fifty persons who all solemnly declared that they had seen the Lord Jesus after He was risen from the dead. Their testimony can be easily dismissed with a modern sneer. But such procedure neither demonstrates falsity nor disproves truth. This first-hand evidence, under all the circumstances, remains as firm as granite rock upon a coast swept by broken billows.

(xii) For the converted Rabbi who testifies to it so abundantly, shows himself far removed indeed from being either pietist or hypocrite. It was in no boastful spirit that he claimed to have 'laboured more abundantly than they all.'[1] By reason of his tireless devo-

[1] As illustrating what was said above touching the desperate shifts to which the modern destructive criticism of Christian foundations is reduced, the following is one of the latest specimens issued by the Rationalist Press Association: 'The notion that a suddenly converted Paul permeated Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula within the space of twenty years, with the gospel of a

tion churches sprang up throughout Asia Minor. And more; we have reliable evidence that in every one of these, differ as they might in other respects, the reality of Christ's Resurrection was accepted as the very basis of their faith and hope and work.

(xiii) But the rest of the apostles were assuredly not idle. They also founded churches in various other localities, though we know little about any other than those due to the apostle Peter. We do know, however, that his work, and indeed his general view of the scope of the gospel message, was in some respects quite distinct from that of Paul. The contention was real enough to keep them generally apart, each labouring according to his own convictions. But on the one great theme of all, the actuality of Christ's Resurrection from the dead, there was never any contention at all. From beginning to end, and under all circumstances, there was hereupon perfect accord. This also applied to all their respective adherents. It is simply impossible to account for such unanimity, on such a theme, at such times, and amongst such men, on any other supposition than that they had sufficient grounds, in fact, for this unequivocal insistence upon the reality of the Resurrection of the Christ whom they preached.

Christ that had hitherto been unknown there, and set up numbers of Christian institutions there, is a miracle beside which all the others related in ecclesiastical history are mere child's play' (Kalthoff, *The Rise of Christianity*, p. 31). At other times writers of the same school say with the utmost confidence, as does the very translator of these German rhapsodies, that all that happened was 'perfectly natural.' But since we do certainly know that what is here jeered at is historically true, we see how completely unbelief answers itself.

(xiv) A good illustration of this is afforded in the Epistle to the Galatians, one of Paul's unchallengeable [1] letters, written less than thirty years after the Crucifixion. Here we find clear confirmation of the narrative in the Acts, as to the opposition offered to Paul and his teaching by zealous Jewish Christian converts. Their acute bitterness needs no comment. It is certain that if there had been any fundamental difference herein between him and them, it would have been emphasized. But they are all entirely one as to the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus. Such unanimity constitutes the very highest kind of testimony.

(xv) It is also to be noted that the region of unequivocal assent not only includes Jerusalem and Judea, with the main centres just named, but a very much wider district. There is no room for honest doubt as to what news would be taken home by the 'devout men from every nation under heaven' who were assembled at Jerusalem at Pentecost. 'Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians'—such a list, even if dramatically stated, at least testifies to the vast area represented. Certainly they all heard the one doctrine, viz. that 'This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.' Thus were sown the

[1] This word is used deliberately, in full view of the recent allegations of the Dutch school represented in the avowal of Prof. Stech, of Berne, who declares himself 'forced to deny that any of these four epistles were written by Paul.' Such conjectures simply exhibit a subjectivity which does not seriously call for refutation.

seeds of the belief which within seventy years of the Crucifixion was undoubtedly held by multitudes over the whole of the then known world.

(xvi) Another special feature of the case is verified by our own knowledge of human nature. The earliest portions of the New Testament bear witness to the rise of parties and party feeling, even from the outset. That these continued to grow and developed later into distinct heresies, from the Ebionites on to the followers of Marcion, is matter of history, often indeed both strange and saddening. But one thing is noticeable and unmistakable, viz. that amidst all the heat and conflict of early opinions, there is no controversy at all regarding the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The manner of its mention in 1 Corinthians is at once suggestive and typical. The contrary is put, manifestly, as a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* which no true Christian believer would for a moment think of entertaining.

(xvii) We may now be permitted to take also into account the rest of the New Testament. That we find great variety outside the four chief Pauline Epistles and the Acts, is manifest enough. For the moment, without conceding the hyper-critical suggestions of some moderns, we may waive the authorship alike of Epistles and Gospels, so long as their dates are acknowledged, together with the fact that the Epistles were locally, and the Gospels generally, accepted as authentic. The dates assigned to the latter by Prof. Harnack are: Matthew A.D. 70–75; Mark 65–70; Luke 78–93 (the general estimate now is 75–85); John 80-110. All the Epistles were written before 70, except

those of John, Jude, and 2 Peter, probably also the enigmatic book known as 'Revelation.'

Two indisputable facts, on the whole, emerge.

First, amidst all the differences of author, time, and place, we have in these writings the genuine witness of the first century to Christian convictions and doctrines.

Secondly, as regards the great question here under consideration, they were all absolutely unanimous. All the alleged discrepancies, contradictions, differences, &c., do but serve to throw up into stronger relief the unmistakable fact that, whether the Resurrection of Jesus be actually true or not, all the writers of the New Testament, without any qualification or hesitation, assume and assert that it was so. It is difficult for a candid mind to overrate the significance of this fact.

(xviii) All other documents of any value at all, relating to the early Christian faith, outside the New Testament, testify to the same, whether they are written for or against the Christians. An interesting specimen of this has recently come to light in the discovery by Prof. J. Rendel Harris at St. Catharine's Convent on Mount Sinai, of the long-lost *Apology* of Aristides, which was presented to the Emperor Hadrian about A.D. 130. Amongst other references we find this [1]: 'Christians reckon the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God most high. He was pierced by the Jews; and He died and was buried; and they say that after three days He rose and ascended to heaven.' Such is the literal rendering of the Syriac. This succinct statement

[1] See p. 83 of the very interesting little volume published by Mrs. Harris, entitled *The Newly Recovered Apology of Aristides.*

faithfully represents the acknowledgement of all other such writings. Even the specimens we possess of Christian apocryphal productions, numerous, garrulous, and often grotesque as they are, preserve the same unhesitating attitude in regard to the reality of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. This also applies to the opponents of Christianity, from the very beginning to the time of Celsus. The latter writer, indeed, representing the middle of the second century, is perhaps the most noticeable of all. For amidst all his keen and bitter criticism, he takes entirely for granted the absolute confidence of Christians that their Lord was risen from the dead.

These considerations should suffice to put beyond the reach of controversy the fact of the unequivocal, unanimous, unvarying conviction of the whole of the primitive Church, viz. that the faith they held so dear, which cost many of them all that they possessed, depended entirely upon the actuality of Christ's Resurrection. The question, then, that confronts us is, whence came this strange, vast, unhesitating, indestructible conviction, which formed unquestionably the very reason and essence of the Christian propaganda, as well as the dynamic whereby it ultimately triumphed? Sir G. Cornwall Lewis, in his *Credibility of Early Roman History*, says: 'The credibility of a witness to a fact seems to depend mainly on the four following conditions: (*a*) That the fact fell within reach of his senses; (*b*) that he observed or attended to it; (*c*) that he possesses a fair amount of intelligence and memory; (*d*) that he is free from any sinister or misleading interest; or if not, that he is a person of veracity.'

These tests are rational, and may be fully accepted as applying to the subject in hand. They point to the following features of the present case: that the witnesses for the Resurrection were entirely competent; that they were sufficient in number; that their testimony commences from the very time when the event is alleged to have happened; that they were free from any interest leading them in the direction of such testimony, everything rather urged the contrary; that they give every proof of veracity; that the development of party differences between them is guarantee against all sinister collusion; that their witness was accepted at once by many in the very place where the marvel they alleged was said to have transpired; that from this centre their testimony was spread abroad until the world became filled with the doctrine; that along with it there came a new moral vitality and an unparalleled spiritual impulse which have not only lasted until now, but, in spite of all hindrance alike from friend or foe, have issued in the mightiest potencies for the highest good the world has ever known.[1]

[1] The comment of Professor Wilkins hereupon is well worthy of attention (*The Light of the World*, p. viii.): 'Is it, or is it not the case, that at the beginning of the Christian era there was such a radical change wrought in the light and life of the world that the laws of strict induction require us to suppose for its production a cause distinctly superhuman? I have tried to give my reasons for believing that the Christian ethics so far transcend the ethics of any or all the Pagan systems in method, in purity, and in power, as to compel us to assume for them an origin, differing in *kind* from the origin of any purely human system. I believe, with Dr. Pressensé, that "one resurrection at least cannot be denied: the resurrection of the world," and that must carry with it the resurrection of the World's Redeemer.'

This summary, we deliberately affirm, is true to fact; although it might be much more effectively stated in detail. A cause for all, equally natural and adequate, is found, if we accept as actual that which these witnesses so vehemently affirmed. Christ actually risen is in Himself the explanation of all that had preceded, the pledge of all that He had asserted and promised, the Saviour able to save to the uttermost, the Master to serve whom were equally glorious in life or by death.

But if He did not rise again, then we are both entitled and compelled to demand, in the name of reason quite as much as of religion, what is the true and sufficient explanation of all that the foregoing connotes?

(3) *The Resulting Dilemma*

It has been well and truly said that 'a sound historical criticism must admit that *something* happened, to change the mood and the lives of the disciples from dejection and cowardice to confidence and readiness for martyrdom; nor do we think it psychologically likely that that something was a mere hallucination or series of hallucinations.' The great question, then, to be honestly faced is, *what was that 'something'?* It is most truly as well as clearly put into the form of a dilemma. Three and only three possibilities are open for acceptance: truth, delusion, fraud. From these we must take our choice, as to the adequate cause of the universal and indestructible belief in the risen Christ, which overcame alike the Jewish, Greek, and Roman world.

[1] *The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 188.

(1) Let us say that Christ did actually rise from the dead, as the witnesses all everywhere asserted. Whether the manner of the Resurrection was 'physical' or 'spiritual,' may for the moment be postponed. Jesus did actually live and die, and then afterwards so rise from the dead that 'it was no delusion that Jesus was living.'[1] That is all we now assert. If this were so, it affords a clear and sufficient explanation of all that followed. In the words of the latest theology, 'To see Him return triumphant was the one thing required to counteract their feeling that all was lost, and the best means of demonstrating this victory over death, was to enable them to behold Him in the body with which they were already familiar and which they loved so well.'[2] This gives a rational as well as spiritual foundation for a genuine, eager, unconquerable faith. Upon this basis, and with such a dynamic, Christianity may well have developed as it did. Its triumph was then in the highest sense natural.

(2) If this be not true, then the real, rapid, and irresistible spread of Christian belief in the early Churches, with its unbroken continuance and manifest influence until now, must have been due to (i) known and cunningly concocted fraud, or (ii) the credulous delusion of a few brainless and fanatical men and women; or (iii) an inextricable mixture of both. No other possibility presents itself.

(i) Now as to the first of these, it is by all consent given up. It is simply and for ever incredible that men should be conscious deceivers when there was

[1] *The New Theology*, Rhondda Williams, p. 123.
[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 223.

nothing to gain and everything to lose by such deception. The element of known fraud may be left, therefore, wholly out of account.

(ii) When we come to consider the suggestion of delusion, the possibilities of the case resolve themselves plainly into two. Jesus either did die, or He did not.

Take the last case first. The incredibilities involved are so inevitable and so crushing that it would not deserve a moment's thought, but for the fact that, beaten back by all other considerations, some few recent opponents have tried to make it respectable. Thus Mr. Greg, Mr. Voysey, Prof. Huxley, and the Editor of the *Clarion*, have expressed their leaning to this hypothesis.[1] Such advocacy is a great tribute to the Christian reality of the case. For two things are to be specially observed.

First, this is put forth as the very latest and best way out of the difficulties of unbelief that can be suggested, alike by one of the most eminent men of science and by a most shrewd and popular journalist. Surely this should be the anti-Christian ultimatum. Then, see what it amounts to. (*a*) Note the incredibility of the notion itself. As if the Roman soldiers did not know death as well as a modern critic armed, as our Professor suggests, with a clinical thermometer! (*b*) It makes Christ Himself to be a deluded fanatic before, and a wilful deceiver after, His Crucifixion! (*c*) All the early

[1] Thus says the last named, in *God and my Neighbour*: 'What evidence is forthcoming that Christ did not recover from a swoon and that his friends did not take him away in the night?' (p. 95). I have dealt with this so fully elsewhere (see *The Miracles of Unbelief*, p. 139, *Clarion Fallacies*, p. 123) that it would be waste of print simply to repeat here all the details of the involved incredibilities.

witnesses of the Resurrection become conscious liars, first ceaselessly avowing and then suffering and dying for a profitless assertion which all the time they knew to be utterly false! (*d*) All the Jewish, Greek, and Roman converts were either fools—in that they committed themselves wholly to a hearsay marvel which ordinary scrutiny would soon have exposed, or knaves and fools in one by becoming sharers in a plot to deceive the whole human world around them, with the prospect of nothing but shame, and suffering, and death, as their reward! (*e*) Hence the whole structure of New Testament morality rests upon a gross and wilful falsehood! (*f*) The final and total explanation of the rise and progress, development and present influence of Christianity in the world, is simply—a lie! Is it any wonder that such keen critics as Strauss and Keim rejected this whole notion with disdain?[1] And yet this is the latest, best, and utmost that modern scientific knowledge and 'rationalistic' plausibility can bring against the actuality of the Resurrection!

When this suggestion is dismissed as peremptorily as it deserves, the only rival theory worth mentioning is that of Strauss, to the effect that Jesus did really die, but did not really rise. In such case the beliefs of all the early Christians arose simply out of a mixture of visions and myths. This also has been sufficiently considered elsewhere.[2] It will suffice to repeat the briefest summary. The Resurrection was contrary to

[1] For their exact and impressive words see *Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. 139, 140.

[2] See *Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. 141–43, and list of books at the end of that volume.

all the expectations of the disciples. They had nothing to gain in this world, but everything to lose, by accepting and promulgating such a notion. The first believers were all Jews, and any respectable Jew of to-day will serve to show whether Jews are easily moved from their national religion. The notion that such myths could grow out of such sources, is as incredible for lack of time as for want of reason. The stories about Buddha are on such lines comprehensible, but the dates of Paul's Epistles are too well known now to permit any thought of analogy. A Resurrection myth would have had to spring up like Jonah's gourd. And, under all the circumstances, if it had done so, it would have been a greater miracle than the Resurrection itself.

This last remark applies, indeed, to every allegation other than the acknowledgement of the actuality of the event. The question as to what became of the body of Jesus, has never been answered. Its glorious transformation, as suggested by the Apostle Paul, gives an account as natural as supernatural of its disappearance from the tomb. The notion that it could have been stolen, involves a perfect network of absurdities.[1]

So that on the whole, by fair appeal to the primal axiom of all reasoning, that *for every event there must be an adequate cause*, we are warranted in dismissing, deliberately and finally, the alternatives of disbelief, and resting in the assured conviction that 'Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.'

[1] See *Miracles of Unbelief*, p. 147.

(4) *The Naturalness of the Supernatural*

Other explanations being rationally ruled out of account, we may well return to a more positive appreciation of the fact itself. When the unscientific and unwarranted assumption that the miraculous is necessarily incredible is dismissed as it deserves to be, three considerations merit all final emphasis.

(i) Christ being who and what He was, it was far more natural than otherwise that He should rise from the dead. It can never be too plainly affirmed that the Christian doctrine is not here concerned with a resurrection of a dead man, such as science pronounces so inadmissible,[1] but with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That being understood, Hume's suggestion of a balance of probabilities is entirely welcome. It is more probable—much more probable—in this special case, that the event should be true, than the testimony false. The latest theology agrees with the oldest in emphasizing the uniqueness of Jesus.[2] But here

[1] Thus in *God and my Neighbour*, it appears as usual, although the true case has been pointed out hundreds of times. 'Remember we are dealing with probabilities, in the absence of any exact knowledge of the facts, and consider which is more probable—that a man had swooned and recovered; or that a man after lying for three days dead should come to life again and walk away.' Such a presentation of the Christian doctrine is either grossly ignorant, or guiltily unfair. Substitute, however, 'the man Christ Jesus' for 'a man,' and Christian philosophy will most readily accept the principle and justify it on scientific grounds.

[2] 'It is impossible to deny the uniqueness of Jesus; history has settled that question for us.'—'Lest any one should think that this position involves in the slightest degree the diminution of the religious value and the moral pre-eminence of Jesus, let me say that it does the very opposite.'—*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, pp. 76, 96.

again, all Christian doctrine stands or falls together. What the uniqueness of Jesus really means, as to His person and character, we have already outlined in the preceding section. When that is fully considered and accepted, the Resurrection becomes the only natural and consistent sequence to such a life, and character, and death. The assertion attributed to Peter on the day of Pentecost is a fair statement of the naturalness of the supernatural in this case. 'But God has raised Him to life, having terminated the throes of death, for in fact it was not possible for Him to be held fast by death.'[1] Whatever difficulties, therefore, may to-day be alleged in regard to the supernatural element involved in Christ's real Resurrection, they cannot be confined to it as an isolated event. They belong to the fair consideration of the whole life, and works, and character, and death, preceding the Resurrection. It is the solidarity of the total history which demands true estimate. Granted the Christ of the Gospels, and the Christ of the Resurrection is the natural outcome. This is increasingly perceived by modern 'advanced' critics no less than by unbelievers. Hence the necessary attempts to undermine the historicity of Jesus, or to impugn the credibility of His fourfold biography. These are sufficiently answered in their place.

(ii) The reality of the Resurrection alone gives us the rational explanation of the multitudes of early and difficult conversions which unquestionably took place. An eminent German scholar has recently put the case in vivid words. 'Was it in the impenetrable darkness

[1] Acts ii. 34. Weymouth.

of a corner, far removed from the light of history, there arose upon the world the power which has exerted the most profound influence upon the whole nature of mankind, from its most elementary motives to its loftiest aims? So many imagine in these days. But it was not so! Rather, the paths by which Christianity made its entrance into the world were illumined by the clear light of a world of civilization and culture.' [1]

It is well to contrast these words from an acknowledged scholar with the irresponsible utterance of a popular opponent of Christianity who declares that 'the accounts of the Resurrection in the Gospels belong to the less credible form of statement. They emanated from a credulous and superstitious people in an unscientific age and country.' [2] Our great English logician's question quoted above [3] is a sufficient reply to every such suggestion. Any open mind can see that the more scorn is poured upon 'the time-spirit in the first century,' the more hopeless becomes the task of getting out of it by natural evolution, the character of Christ and the ethics of the New Testament. It is a case of Balak once more. The spirit summoned to curse is unwillingly constrained to bless.

Furthermore, the futility of such innuendoes as to the unscientific nature of the first Christian age, becomes manifest as soon as ever we remember that they were not concerned at all with recondite matters of science, but of plain fact and manifest personal character. We

[1] *The History of Early Christian Literature*, by Dr. Herman von Soden, Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, p. i.

[2] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 101.

[3] See p. 119. cf. also Miss Cobbe's estimate on p. 123.

read, for instance, in the Acts [1] that 'the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.' Think what this record involves. Until it can be demonstrated to be utter fiction, reasons for such facts can never be mere fraud or fanaticism, hysteria or myth. The devout Jew, the intellectual Greek, the haughty Roman, were not the men to be thus easily drawn from all that they knew best and cared for most, into a shameful fellowship centred in a crucified Galilean.

(iii) The reality of Christ's Resurrection supplies the only valid foundation for such a system of moral and spiritual truth as Christianity presents.[2] The facts are such that the miraculous element may be pronounced absolutely inevitable. For if the Resurrection be cast out of thought as incredible, a greater incredibility at once emerges, viz. the supposition that the Christian ideal of character, as embodied in the all-comprehensive term 'holiness,'[3] can have sprung from either superstitious credulity or cunning selfishness.

The simple yet transcendent goodness of Jesus, the unique self-sacrifice of His death, the actuality of His Resurrection, the holy impulses arising from its appreciation by His disciples—these, with all that they involve, give us a reasonable account of the origin of New Testament Christianity, as well as of the fact

[1] ch. vi. 7. There is no sufficient reason why this verse should be regarded, as Spitta and others suggest, as an interpolation.

[2] See *Miracles of Unbelief*, p. 151, &c.

[3] To be more fully considered later on.

that it is to-day larger, purer, and more promising than ever. Nothing else does this.

(iv) Here, then, finally, the logical and the spiritual meet in worthy embrace. On grounds of reason, because we can intelligently do no other, we believe that the crucified Jesus is also the risen Christ. For all real Christianity, however, it is equally essential that this belief should be no mere mental victory, no cold conclusion of the reason, but a burning conviction ceaselessly potent in influence upon character. When upon any sincere human soul there dawns the actuality of the Resurrection of Christ, the classical argument of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans [1] becomes the very ideal of daily life. 'Like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.' For every true Christian, belief in the Resurrection is only valid in the degree to which it is confirmed by corresponding character. Else it is, after all, only a dead letter of the 'grammar of assent.' Not grammar, however, but life; not mere assent but spontaneous devotion; not intellectual conceit but practical lovingkindness; not petty bigotry but Christ-like charity: these are the true and only issues of a genuine faith that Christ is risen indeed. These alone are at once 'accepted of God and approved of men.'

(3) The Attitude of the Latest Theology

It goes without saying that some notice of so crucial a matter as the Resurrection of Jesus, must be taken by

[1] vi. 4.

any new movement of theological thought. Hence we turn somewhat eagerly to those who represent 'the new theology' of to-day, and seek to know their judgement hereupon. In the main their attitude discloses two features. They accept the reality, but insist upon what they term the 'spirituality' of Christ's Resurrection. Such a position, however, is certainly not new, seeing that it has already been fully discussed by not a few Christian writers.[1] Only one or two salient points call for notice.

The best-known advocate of the movement in question differs from his associates somewhat remarkably in this particular. He goes so far as to say that in regard to 'the hallucination theory, the apparition theory, the swoon theory,' &c.—'No such explanation of the universally held Christian conviction that the physical body of Jesus actually rose from the tomb, is altogether sufficient to account for it.' He is thus led 'to believe that less than justice has been done by liberal thinkers to the theory of the physical resurrection of Jesus.'[2] His own suggestion is that in the risen Christ 'we have a being whose consciousness belongs to the fourth-dimensional plane, adjusting Himself to the capacity of those on a three-dimensional plane, for the sake of proving to them beyond dispute that

> Life is ever lord of death,
> And love can never lose its own.'

[1] Nothing that is now advanced is more pronounced in this respect than the thoughtful chapters of Dr. E. A. Abbott in *The Kernel and the Husk*, published more than twenty years ago. For a careful consideration of them I must again be content to refer to *The Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. 155–73. The substance of all that is now suggested is there anticipated, and need not be here repeated.

[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, pp. 221–224

This view does not call for discussion here. It is at least quite as supernatural as the conviction of the apostle, which evangelical faith generally follows, that the resurrection body of Jesus was a transformed, glorified, and spiritual body.

With this exception, however, the advocates of the latest theology appear to reject what is generally called the 'physical' resurrection, and to endorse in the main the convictions of Dr. E. A. Abbott and others of recent times. The following points are all that need here be considered.

(i) It is a curious inconsistency to insist upon a 'spiritual' resurrection only, whilst denying the credibility of a spiritual body. The transformation of the physical body of Christ into the spiritual body, certainly requires no more blind trust than the suggested continuation of the personality of Jesus without a body at all.

(ii) The assertion so often repeated that Christianity is not 'built upon an empty tomb,' is really uncalled for. At all events evangelical faith has never affirmed such a thing. 'Why, then,' it is asked, 'should we demand a mere physical fact as the necessary foundation of our faith that Jesus was not conquered by death?'[1] To which the answer is that no such demand is ever made. The writer, indeed, replies to himself a few lines farther on. 'Suppose that the tomb had been empty, it would not be upon that, but upon a spiritual interpretation of it that Christianity would be built.' Precisely. But a fact has to be a fact before there can be any 'interpretation' of it at

[1] *The New Theology*, Rhondda Williams, p. 121.

all. The significance of 'the empty tomb' for Christian theology is in the explanation of the emptiness. It is easy to say that 'Paul's assertion of the Resurrection of Jesus, though it presupposes some connexion between the buried body and the resurrection body, does not conceive that connexion in such a way as to necessitate the theory of the empty tomb.'[1] But no writer of this school gives us any idea as to what that acknowledged 'connexion' was. Nor, certainly, is any reasonable account given as to what did become of the body. Yet, under all the circumstances, it is manifest that it would be a more important item in their thought than it can ever be in ours. The plain truth is that this kind of new theology can, after all, no more do without the empty tomb than with it. A 'spiritual' resurrection which left the body of Jesus to corruption in an ordinary grave, is no real resurrection at all. Continuation of personal existence in spite of a non-empty tomb, is quite another matter, as compared with 'rising from the dead.'

(iii) It is, we know, an easy task to dwell upon discrepancies in the accounts of the Resurrection, but if these are fatal to the acceptance of what is wrongly termed the 'merely physical' theory, they are equally so as to the spiritual. It cannot for a moment be conceded that the silence of Paul means that he neither knew nor cared anything about the fact that the tomb was vacated. As to the rest of the New Testament such emptiness is everywhere taken for granted.[2]

[1] *The New Theology*, Rhondda Williams, p. 114.

[2] It is all very well to say that 'the most intense faith in the Resurrection which the world has ever known—i.e. Paul's—did

Some years since Mr. Beeby set forth, much more explicitly than any writer of the most recent theological school, the difficulties connected with all the theories which specially seek 'to maintain the objective reality of the phenomena' connected with Christ's Resurrection. His own conclusion was that 'The alternative will ultimately be found to be between "spiritual vision" and a physical body perceptible to the ordinary senses of men.'[1] This may well be so. But it must be plainly pointed out that in such a case the difficulties will not be wholly on one side. There are quite as many incomprehensibles in connexion with 'spiritual vision,' as can be alleged against the conception of a 'physical' body supernaturally transformed into a spiritual or glorified body. But if we are dealing with things divine at all—or for that matter, since we are dealing with the things of nature as we know them—what are 'difficulties,' to such limited understandings as ours? Full often they are but the pointers to reality. Does all our modern science put together offer the least explanation of the changes which must and do take place in the insect pupa, in order that it may become the perfect imago? There is no

not apparently rest on the empty tomb on which we are told so often that Christianity is built' (*The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 172). But we must protest once more that evangelical faith never really says any such thing. It says that Christianity is built upon the living Christ who did as really rise again as die. Upon this, we venture to affirm, Paul's faith rested. As to the 'apparently,' we can only suggest that it is simply impossible to infer from his whole treatment of the matter, that Christ's body either still lay mouldering in the grave, or had been, nobody knew how, stolen and destroyed.

[1] *Doctrine and Principles*, p. 192.

pietistic madness whatever in suggesting that when the physical, moral, and spiritual difference between the caterpillar and Christ is duly estimated, the transformation of His merely physical body into the spiritual body, ought to cause even less difficulty of acceptance than does the actual emergence of the glorious Purple Emperor of our own British butterflies from its unlike and unassuming chrysalis condition.

(iv) There are, however, some difficulties which to many minds appear so to attach to what is known as the ' spiritual ' theory of the resurrection of Christ, as to make it altogether incredible. One certainly is that, be the discrepancies of the ' physical ' theory what they may, it is so utterly impossible to make the ' spiritual ' theory square with the New Testament records, that if it be accepted, their reliability is gone for ever. Yet it must be owned that even the ' spiritual ' theory rests ultimately upon the substantial authenticity of the Christian records. What it does, therefore, is to saw off the main branch of the tree upon which it is itself sitting—with the inevitable consequence.

But further, even if this be condoned, and we take the records as they stand, the extreme feebleness of this theory when it comes to construction, rather than destruction, is impressively manifest. Let us take one of the best attempts. ' If a historical explanation is sought,' says Dr. Warschauer—and if not what is to become of genuine Christianity ?—' we should be inclined *tentatively* and *provisionally* to look for a *nucleus* of fact in the story *peculiar to the Fourth Gospel* of Mary Magdalene's visit *while it was yet dark* to the tomb of

the Master.'[1] There 'weeping at the sepulchre which enshrined all that was mortal of Him, she received in the grey dawn *such evidence* of His *immortality* as *made her announce* to the disciples—I have seen the Lord.' The words we have italicized will sufficiently serve to point to the suggestions which, in detailed discussion, would here be hopelessly riddled with difficulties.

The reader is, however, referred to the scrutiny already mentioned[2]; and the following words of an advanced critic will sum up the situation[3]: 'After all that has been said, it must be allowed that the theory of visions, which has of late become so popular, is only a hypothesis; that whilst it explains some things, it fails to explain the main substance of the narrations to be dealt with; nay that it leads us to look at facts historically attested from a distorted and untenable point of view.'

(v) Still, if such a view leads its advocates to a firmer faith, it is not for us either to anathematize it or scorn them. When it is said that 'What we would suggest is that the Resurrection stories prove infinitely *more* than that on the Sunday following the Crucifixion the body of the Lord was found to have disappeared from its resting-place,'[4] we heartily endorse it. The

[1] *The New Evangel*, p. 187.

[2] In *The Miracles of Unbelief*. But it would be also very desirable for any one who is willing to face the whole case fairly, to compare Prof. Milligan's criticism in his able book on *The Resurrection of our Lord*, pp. 81–119, and Dr. Bruce's summary in his *Apologetics*, pp. 383–98.

[3] Keim, in *Jesus von Nazara*, iii. p. 600.

[4] *The New Evangel*, Warschauer, p. 188.

evangelical belief could not possibly be better expressed. The disappearance was but negative, the appearance was positive. We cannot but believe that the negative preceded the positive. If it is easier to some minds to ignore the negative, they may well be left to their own convictions. All Christian believers should be able to heartily adopt the acknowledgement above noticed, but worth repeating, that 'in some direct and unmistakable manner the assurance was conveyed to His disciples that this wonderful life, because it was life indeed, could not be holden of the grave, had triumphed over death, could be imprisoned in no sepulchre.' [1]

To us this seems to mean a great deal more than mere 'spiritual vision,' but if our friends think not, let it be so to them. As Dr. Rashdall has put it, 'The evidence that the apostles believed themselves to have seen the risen Lord, is, indeed, evidence which no sober criticism can set aside; but each of us must inevitably interpret and explain that belief of theirs in accordance with his own presuppositions.' [2]

(vi) We are most of all concerned to-day, as Christian believers, to maintain the actuality of the resurrection of Jesus against the vaunted naturalism and agnosticism which would reduce the whole thesis to mere 'old wives' fables. Mr. Beeby's concluding words may, therefore, now suffice for the expression of Christianity's essential position. 'In the present condition of the inquiry it is fatal folly to identify any theory with the substance of the common faith. The one belief in which all Christian theories unite,

[1] *The New Evangel*, Warschauer, p. 189.
[2] *Doctrine and Development*, p. 179.

is the belief in the survival of Christ through death, and His real presence in the spiritual world as the efficient cause of the appearances.' [1]

(vii) Finally, it cannot possibly be overlooked that this assumption of the indestructible personality of Jesus, takes us back again to the preceding consideration of His person. If the Resurrection only stands for the continuance of a human personality, then Dr. Warschauer is right in suggesting that Christ cannot be regarded now as able to hear and answer prayer.[2]

If, however, the Pastor of the City Temple be warranted in praying publicly, 'Speak, Lord Christ, in the heart of every man and woman in this place,[3] then assuredly it is false to say that 'in the end the

[1] *Doctrine and Principle*, p. 206.

[2] 'I infer that Christ is certainly not the All-Giver, nor, therefore, to be approached in petition' (*The Christian Commonwealth*).

[3] *Christian Commonwealth*, June 20, 1907.

In a recent number of the *Christian Commonwealth* (April 4, 1907), the following prayer of the same preacher and writer is recorded:

'PRAYER

'Our Saviour Christ, our own humanity in the heart and on the throne of God, we come to Thee with a great and reverent confidence because we feel that we have less to do with our presence here than Thou hast, that Thou hast called us ere we thought of turning towards Thee and in Thee to our Father God, and we thank Thee for all the means whereby we have been made to feel the power of Thy drawing and listen to the voice of our Father speaking through Thee to mankind.'

How we can come to 'our own humanity' with 'reverent confidence,' may be left for the writer to settle with Mr. F. Harrison. But if Jesus be not Christ, who is He? And if He be Christ, how in face of this can we be told that Jesus was only man and that there is no 'impassable gulf' between Him and us? If to hear and answer prayer be not the divine prerogative, what meaning is left for the word 'God' at all?

description " God manifest in the flesh " will be as true of every individual soul as ever it was of Jesus.' [1] For it will *never* be either permitted or possible, under Christian auspices, to ask any departed human soul to speak in the hearts of a worshipping congregation.

Here, however, evangelical theology has never wavered. Without making any pretence at philosophical expression or scientific definition, it asserts, on grounds which it holds to be sufficient, the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. Hence, echoing apostolic language, it says concerning Him that ' Although from the beginning He had the nature of God, He did not reckon His equality with God a treasure to be tightly clutched. Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory and took on Him the nature of a bondservant, by becoming a man like other men.' [2] Thence, having passed through the suffering of His passion, He triumphed over death, and as the Lord of life and glory resumed His transcendental oneness with the Father. ' Hence, too, He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, seeing that He ever lives to plead for them.' [2]

This, certainly, is what genuine Christianity stands for. And whether it be true or false, nothing else, and nothing less, has the right under the guise of religion to claim the Christian name.

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 83.
[2] Phil. ii. 6, 7 ; Heb. vii. 25 ; Weymouth.

VI

THE HOLY SPIRIT— THE UNIVERSAL FRIEND IN NEED

'These suggestions point to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is the *reasonable* completion of theological revelation, and as such, His ministry is an impregnable proof of the reasonableness of Christianity. In the person of Jesus Christ truth was outward, visible, and most beautiful; in the person of the Holy Spirit truth is inward, spiritual, all-transfiguring. By the very necessity of the case a bodily Christ could be but a passing figure; but by a gracious mystery He caused Himself to be succeeded by an eternal presence, "even the Spirit of Truth, which abideth for ever." It is claimed then on behalf of Christianity, that there is a Holy Spirit; and to this doctrine is invited not only the homage of the heart, but the full assent of the most robust and dispassionate understanding.'

Dr. Joseph Parker, *The Paraclete*, p. 17.

VI

THE HOLY SPIRIT—THE UNIVERSAL FRIEND IN NEED

'And He, when He comes, will convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement.'

'He will glorify Me, because He will take of what is Mine and will make it known to you.'

'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.'

JOHN xvi. 8, 14 (Weymouth); EPH. iv. 30.

DR. W. N. CLARKE, in his admirable *Outline of Christian Theology*,[1] well says: 'The study of the Holy Spirit naturally follows the study of Christ and His work, for it is by the Holy Spirit that the work of Christ is carried on to its application and the fulfilment of its purpose.' Yet it is a theme which is not only conspicuous by its absence from definite consideration when 'liberal' theologians or 'advanced' critics discuss Christianity,[2] but in evangelical Churches also, despite many hymns and frequent public references,

[1] p. 369. Upon the subject-matter of this whole section, Part V. in Dr. Clarke's volume may be truly pronounced, for tender reverence and careful perspicuity, together with thoughtful reference to both the New Testament and human nature, the best statement of the Christian doctrine of the Spirit that has yet appeared.

[2] Thus the three best-known works which set forth the latest theology, by Mr. R. J. Campbell, Dr. Warschauer, and Mr. Rhondda Williams, all with one consent omit even to mention the subject.

it too often brings rather difficulty than inspiration, and confusion of mind more than comfort of heart. Professor Beyschlag's dogmatic dictum that the conception of the Holy Spirit as a third divine Person 'is one of the most disastrous importations into the Holy Scripture,' would, in all probability, find many echoes in the minds of modern religious thinkers.

And yet it cannot but be seen, upon fair scrutiny, that by some doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Christianity of the New Testament must be judged. It is not merely a case of accepting or rejecting the Fourth Gospel. For however distinctive may be its testimony to certain features of the doctrine as held by the Churches, the rest of our Christian records speak with such unmistakable plainness of the definite existence and work of the Holy Spirit, that some meaning must be attached to the phrase if their authority is to be at all retained. For those who are content to conjure up out of their own religious subjectivity a scheme which they call Christianity, and then condescend to accept certain portions of the New Testament which meet with their approval, as confirmations of it, we fear it will be as impossible as useless to outline any Christian doctrine of the Spirit.

Here, however, it may be candidly repeated that evangelical faith sees no sufficient reason to yield to the modern demand and dismiss the witness of John's Gospel as unreliable.[1] Rather, regarding it as both genuine and substantially authentic, one turns naturally to it as being the fullest, no less than latest, apostolic representation of the truth. Until it is

[1] See pp. 116, 117, 145, 159.

definitely proved that no valid appeal can be made to this source, the Christian mind will certainly ponder again and again the homely yet sublime teachings of Jesus in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the record which comes from the beloved disciple.[1] 'If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go I will send Him unto you.' 'When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all the truth.' 'He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will declare it unto you.' Whilst Christianity lasts on earth, such words can never dwindle into insignificance. Mr. Mill's strange characterization of these utterances of Jesus as 'poor stuff,' recoils upon himself. Such an estimate cannot be intelligently endorsed. Nor will any portions of the New Testament ever be more precious than these, to the thoughtful believer.

(1) In considering, then, the significance of these plain words of Jesus we have first to do, in English, with the translation. For the best-known term 'Comforter,' is due rather to the hearts than the heads of the translators. The most accurate rendering is certainly 'Advocate,' and when justice is done to it, nothing is lost here, any more than elsewhere, by accuracy. In truth, no English word suffices fully to express the Greek παράκλητος, for which reason on some occasions 'Paraclete' is employed. Yet in such a case as this, it is especially desirable that we should have terms which in our own tongue have a definite meaning. It were better to adopt in turn all the suggested names—Advocate, Comforter, Helper—than

[1] See p. 21, footnote.

to retain a mere familiar sound without clear significance. Perhaps 'Friend in need,' as suggested by Dr. Clarke, is at once simplest, deepest, and most comprehensive.

Upon the real existence, definite coming, and immeasurable helpfulness of this 'Friend in need,' manifestly Jesus Himself laid the greatest possible emphasis. One of two things, therefore. the modern thinker upon this theme must do. He must either, at the outset, put away altogether the Fourth Gospel, as unworthy of serious regard ; or he must pay especial heed to the assertions and assurances which came from the Master's own lips, at the most tender and tragic period of His whole career. Even in regard to Socrates, the sayings attributed to his last hours are cherished above all. How much more so, concerning the Christ of the Gospels !

(2) Four things, then, may here be clearly enunciated : The assertions of Jesus Himself ; the echoing testimony of Paul ; the confirmation of the rest of the apostles and the early Churches ; the general Christian consciousness of the first three centuries of Christian history.

(i) The whole witness of Jesus Himself to the reality of the personality of the Holy Spirit is unquestionable. Using the term 'personality' for the moment with reserve as to its special connotation, there is yet no other word in our language to express unequivocally the teaching here that the Holy Spirit in Christ's promises is not an influence, or a disposition, or an impersonal power, but a personality as real as His own. 'The most unartificial explanation of our Saviour's own conception is that the Holy Spirit is

a person.'[1] It is simply impossible to take Christ's words seriously, unless the terms He employs stand for personal attributes. 'Person,' as above intimated,[2] in relation to the divine nature is not synonymous with its application to a human being. But it does serve to distinguish the Holy Spirit, as referred to by Jesus Himself, from a mere divine effluence or diffusive force. And unless it be conceded that Matt. xxviii. 19 is a late interpolation—though, as already stated, there is really no ground for so thinking, beyond the whim of the critic[3]—the personality of the Holy Spirit is at least as fully implied as that of the Father and the Son, in the formula which is there attributed to Christ Himself.

(ii) Nothing else can honestly be inferred from the teaching of the Apostle Paul. A fair and full induction from his writings permits no other conclusion than that he believed and taught the real personality of the Holy Spirit.[4]

(iii) Judging from the Acts of the Apostles, taken in connexion with the other writings of the New Testament, it must again be said that a complete induction yields no other conclusion than that the first Christians thought of and referred to the Holy Spirit in the same way as is predicated concerning Jesus Himself.[5]

(iv) The gathering Christian consciousness of the first three centuries exhibits similarly a growing belief in the definite personality of the Holy Spirit, even though it was kept in abeyance through the intensity of the conflict concerning the Person of Christ. The

[1] Prof. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 338. [2] See pp. 15, 20.
[3] See p. 5.
[4] See Rom. viii. 15, 16, 26, 27; 1 Cor. xii. 4–11; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Gal. iv. 6. [5] See Acts xiii. 2; xv. 28, &c.; ii. 4; ix. 15; 1 Pet. i. 11.

position since that day is well summarized by Professor Curtis:[1] 'The increasing deposit of Christian consciousness for all the Christian centuries, more and more requires the personality of the Holy Spirit. It is not an instance of fundamental addition to the Word of God; but it is an instance where Christian history and Christian consciousness have rejected certain possible interpretations of biblical data, and have resulted in an interpretation which is not satisfactory to any rationalistic scholar. But the rationalistic scholar himself has just as much bias as the Christian scholar.'

(3) Whence, then, it may well be asked, comes the hesitation, not to say confusion, in the minds of so many, even in the evangelical Churches, in regard to this august theme? To which the first reply may well be, that sincere and reverent hesitation is far better, and has in it more real faith, than the loud reiteration of thoughtless sentences concerning the 'Holy Ghost.'[2] In face of the abysmal depths of mystery associated with human personality, there is ample room for a real and reverent agnosticism concerning the divine nature. There is also to-day an unquestionable tendency to look for what is termed a 'simpler faith,' as well as a 'simpler life,' both on the part of avowed believers and undecided adherents of the Churches.

[1] *The Christian Faith*, p. 330.

[2] It is indeed high time that this term 'Ghost,' which is for modern usage so unworthily misleading, as well as in this connexion meaningless, dropped altogether out of employment. It is little less than shocking to listen to its repetition on some public occasions, when neither reason nor reverence is involved. The profitless inconsistency of the Revised Version herein, sometimes employing one name sometimes the other, is greatly to be regretted, and should be always corrected by every public reader.

To the latter, it will always seem simpler to think of God as our Father, and leave out of account all other considerations which may culminate in the doctrine of a Trinity in unity. For the former, it is as much more easy as it appears to be more practical, in direct contact with troubled men and women, to say 'Come to Jesus'; and to rest content with laying stress upon His own words, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'; or with the assurance concerning Him 'Wherefore He is able to save those to the uttermost who come to God through Him.' The sublime and tender figure which moves throughout the Gospels on the plane of ordinary human being, to the tragedy of Calvary and the triumph of the Resurrection morn, seems to obscure all other vision for the sincere mind and all other concern for the lowly heart.

Yet true Christian doctrine, with these very Gospels in hand, must point out that this shrinking from the actuality and the personality, the ceaseless activity and the immeasurable influence of the Holy Spirit, as something more mysterious, more difficult, farther removed, than the Christ of the New Testament, is the very reverse of the teaching of Jesus Himself, as it is also of the whole philosophy of the Christian religion. Those who to-day so urgently demand that we should go 'back to Christ,' must at least be prepared to say which Christ they mean. For the Christ of 'liberal' theology, and of 'advanced' criticism, is certainly not the Christ of the Gospels. We shall here, for reasons already given, assume the latter. In which case nothing is made more clear, as we look and listen, than that, in a most real sense and to a

strange extent, His work was a failure; and according to His own account that failure could neither be prevented nor, whilst He remained on earth, turned into any great degree of success. 'He came to the things that were His own, and His own people gave Him no welcome.'[1] And even at the end of His training of those who in their own poor way welcomed Him, He had to tell them 'I have yet much more to say to you, but you are unable at present to bear the burden of it. But when He is come—the Spirit of truth—He will guide you into all the truth.'[2]

(4) What, then, does modern Christian thought, striving to be equally rational and reverent, say concerning this divine aftermath? At least three things. Such a personal work as that attributed to the Holy Spirit is, according to Christian theology, unmistakably needed; it is a real help towards that intellectual simplification which the modern mind desires; it is an unbounded source of the very moral and spiritual inspiration which, above all else, civilization appears increasingly to lack, even if not to want.

(i) That it was the mission of Jesus to reveal the divine Fatherhood, is a commonplace of Christian theology. But such commonplace becomes a profound mystery when closely contemplated by earnest thought. There is, indeed, sublime simplicity in the recorded phrase 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father'; but, all critical questions apart, this revelation of the divine reality by means of a human personality, has become the insoluble problem of the ages. Evangelical theology is well warranted in appealing equally to the

[1] John i. 11, Weymouth. [2] John xvi. 12, 13, Weymouth.

sincerity and intellectual validity of its doctrines, but it cannot ignore the fact that large numbers of thinkers, whose intelligence and sincerity are beyond question, come to other conclusions. The outstanding fact remains that in the very act of revealing the Father, the Christ of the Gospels has made Himself an enigma for humanity. In spite of all the intense conflicts of the first three centuries, and the wars of words that have since then been waged upon this theme, the crucial question 'What think ye of Christ?' has even to this hour received no final answer. God alone is the Judge of the moral and spiritual worth of the all-prevailing differences of conviction. The fact of Christ remains, but no less remains the mystery. Nor does the latest theology, as we have seen, give any more reliable clue to a satisfactory solution of it. The need for some such promise on His part as we find in the Fourth Gospel,[1] is overwhelmingly manifest.

It is not too much to repeat, in face of all the facts, that the question 'Who is Christ?' is the greatest that can come to human mind or heart, for all the other great questions are involved in it. Why it should still be so, if the promise just mentioned has been fulfilled, is in some respects a tragically perplexing inquiry. Yet the answer is undoubtedly to be found rather in the region of human moral

[1] John xvi. 14, 15: 'He will glorify Me, because He will take of what is Mine and will make it known to you. Everything that the Father has is Mine: that is why I said that the Spirit of Truth takes of what is Mine, and will make it known to you.' Such an utterance shows, at least, why it is absolutely necessary for liberal theology and advanced criticism to dimiss this Gospel from authoritative consideration.

responsibility than in the suggestion of divine failure. Christian belief, at all events, thinks of the Holy Spirit as the great transcendent Teacher who echoes to successive generations of men what the Christ whom He would reveal said to the first little band of perplexed disciples : ' I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' It may well happen, if Christ be what He claims, that centuries have yet to elapse before humanity will see Him as He is.

(ii) Meanwhile, the craving for simplification of belief, so far as it can be rationally gratified in a world in which nothing whatever is really simple, ought to find help rather than hindrance in the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit. For men of earnest thought it ought in a very real sense to be easier to believe in the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, than in the blending of the divine and human in one true man as the doctrine of the Incarnation insists. To modern Philistinism we know it will be as light a matter to dismiss both articles of faith, as it was for Alexander of old to cut the Gordian knot. But in so doing they, even as he, thereby accomplish nothing. Both the fact and the mystery remain untouched.

Even within the pale of Christendom, however, it is for many minds, equally able and sincere, a perpetual difficulty to conceive of ' God manifest in the flesh.' Indeed it must ever be so for all who have any apprehension of what such a conception must involve. But in the case of the Holy Spirit that difficulty does not exist. Waiving the old-time question of the personality of God—which is always open to the solution that the divine personality is not necessarily less real

for being incomparably vaster than the human—the only matter for sincere thought is as to how the Divine Spirit can act directly on the human. And that is no difficulty at all. For even apart from those marvels of the world of mind which are being scrutinized by modern psychical research, and the psychological actualities which some would characterize as a 'subliminal consciousness,' the human action of one spirit upon another gives us all that is needed by way of illustration as to what is possible. Tennyson's words above quoted [1] admit of frequent repetition, just because they are the succinct expression of truth which is as unchallengeable by science as sufficient for the justification of Christian theology.

Thus, when viewed with clear-eyed reverence, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is at once the nearest, easiest, most significant conception of the divine nature and influence that can be presented to the human mind.

> O strangely art Thou with us, Lord,
> Neither in height nor depth to seek:
> In nearness shall Thy voice be heard;
> Spirit to spirit Thou dost speak.

With good warrant, therefore, has a modern writer said: 'That it is only in Christianity we have the distinct revelation of the Holy Spirit as personal, is widely acknowledged. But there must be some reason for it, apart from the teachings of Christ merely. Christ did not just *tell* His disciples that there was this third person in the Godhead who had hitherto been unrevealed as a person. The reason must have reference to the person and work of Christ. The question why it

[1] See p. 27.

is that only in Christianity the Holy Spirit is revealed as personal, ought to be more pondered than it has been.' [1]

(iii) Until, therefore, the whole New Testament, no less than the Fourth Gospel, is dismissed from serious regard, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is essential to Christianity. To ignore Him, is not only to deny, but also to lose, Christ. Religious philosophy, under the plea of the divine immanence, may construct theological schemes more in accord with some modern thought, and they should ever receive due regard; for genuine Christian theology is pledged to take into full account 'whatsoever things are true' [2] But such schemes have no right to conjure with the name of Christ as though they, alone and at last, were doing Him justice, when they take no notice whatever of what He Himself declared to be an even greater mission than His own.

A philosophical system of religion may contain much valuable truth, and so far merit appreciation. But manifestly the religious philosophy which alone has a right to be called Christian, is that which is based upon the New Testament record—regarded as substantially true. Apart from such foundation there is no Christianity at all. Criticism may refine details, but it does not touch main features. 'These things,' we have already noted, one of the most thoughtful advocates of the latest theology says in regard to 'the changeless Christ,' 'no criticism can shake, these certainties no philosophy disprove, these facts no science dissolve away.' [3] Such words are as re-

[1] W. L. Walker, *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, p. 94.
[2] Phil. iv. 8.
[3] *The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 224.

freshing to-day as an oasis in a desert. But whence are they drawn? What is their guarantee? Certainly they rest, not upon ecclesiastical traditions, but upon the portraiture of the Gospels. If that is not valid, they are but the pious subjectivities of religious hero-worship. If, however, these records are sufficiently reliable to give us such a Christ, with Him must also come His own avowal of the incompleteness of His work, and the unmistakable promise that it should be continued, emphasized, enlarged, throughout the ages, by One whom He Himself deemed as capable of teaching and helping, of comforting and guiding, as only a true person can be. To omit that doctrine from the gospel of Christ is, therefore, simply to substitute another gospel from that which He Himself asserted.

To-day it is a palpable certainty that we do not, cannot, shall not, see Jesus as the first disciples saw Him. But if He be true, that very fact is itself the pledge that there is always near us, willing, waiting, yearning, to work with us and in us, a Friend in need who is at once Advocate, Teacher, Helper, Comforter. Here the very truth itself compels us to leave behind the technicalities of theology, and face the great plain issue which becomes inevitable. If this be true, it is indeed a tremendous truth. A more serious responsibility cannot be taken intellectually, than to set aside as worthless the whole attitude of the New Testament. But unless we are prepared so to do, even to the extent of deeming Christ either deceiver or deceived, we are by Him committed to a truth which is alike practical and transcendental. The latter glows in the words which in this light become incandescent:

'This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.' The former comes into operation as soon as such knowledge is in any degree realized. For it is to give our whole life a new meaning, and to give every hour a new sacredness, if we are to understand that definitely, everywhere and always, our spirit is in touch with the Divine Spirit. This is definitely but immeasurably more than the philosophic doctrine of divine immanence. It is immanence intensified to the point of consciousness. Hereupon Dr. W. N. Clarke has well said that 'The doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the living God, was already strong and vital before the Triunity in God was known, and is still full of life. If we teach this, we announce a living reality, not a speculative or dogmatic truth, and we touch men in the very life. If we teach this we have no need to argue for the divinity of the Holy Spirit, nor are we dependent for the personality of the Holy Spirit upon the success of our endeavours to distinguish persons within the Godhead. The ambiguity of the word 'person' does not trouble us. The Holy Spirit is divine since God is divine, and personal since God is personal. The Holy Spirit is no mere influence, derived, secondary, impersonal, and vanishing, but is no other than God Himself in vital contact with the spirits of men whom He has made.' [1]

(5) It is thus rightly intimated that the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, like all the deepest realities of our ordinary human consciousness, passes beyond the bounds of mere ratiocination into personal experi-

[1] *Outline of Theology*, p. 372.

ence as indefinable as undeniable. The Christianity of Christ never stands for a purely logical system. It is a promise of life, a doctrine for life. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as learned from Christ, is the nearest approach that human thought can formulate of the closest communion of God with man. How essential this truth is to the realization of any such Kingdom of Heaven upon earth as Christianity certainly ought to represent, becomes ever more, not less, manifest with the passing of the centuries.

(i) The phrase in Daniel, 'Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased,' is indeed finding a fulfilment measurelessly beyond the thought of the ancient seer. But the added knowledge, however vast, has tended even more towards uncertainty than certainty in regard to all our greatest themes. In many directions the cry of Philip is not only reiterated but intensified: 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' And instead of the vision of 'sweetness and light' which should naturally result from such a revelation as His, the dark clouds of unbelief appear to be so far spreading as to promise general darkness, if not despair. The pathos of the growing cry 'O if we only knew'—is immeasurable. It is, however, directly met in Christ's definition of eternal life—'that they may know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.' To impart such knowledge, not necessarily in human syllogisms, but as actually as in all other cases of ultra-syllogistic knowledge, is, Jesus solemnly declares, the special and lasting mission of the Holy Spirit. Such a mission, if only real, is now more precious than ever.

(ii) Nor is there any honest denying of the fact that

all the knowledge which in sureness and sweetness, in satisfaction and potency, tends to make life here and now most nobly worth living, is acquired, not from books or the contemplation of things, but from intercourse with persons. The evolution of human character ever comes to pass, not through the multiplication of formulae, but through contact with personalities. Whether the philosophies of men approve of this or not, they cannot alter it. It is the human way, we may make bold to say, because it is the divine way. Much more, then, may it well be so in regard to realities which are deepest and highest, and truths which bring men into closest communion with God.

(iii) Beyond pointing to the naturalness as well as the supernaturalness of the actual influence of the ever-present, divinely personal Spirit upon the human mind, Christian theology makes no attempt at defining either the methods or the extent of His work. But as Dr. W. N. Clarke says: 'The difficulty of defining the Holy Spirit's work in the world, should never prevent our recognizing the reality of it. It is a great fact. Good does not grow up without God. All good that appears in men grows up under the fostering care of the Holy Spirit. Awakenings of public conscience, deepenings of conviction concerning right and wrong, higher and truer views of good and evil, reforms and changes for the better in actual life, quickenings of religion, the unquestionable moral progress of the race—these are works of the Holy Spirit, God in man, acting in and with the powers that He has given to humanity.' [1]

[1] *Outline of Theology*, p. 380.

But however real and manifest is upward development, both in the Church and the world of to-day, there can be no doubt that still further improvement is greatly needed. The Churches certainly have now nobler thoughts of God, and civilization holds a worthier estimate of man than ever before in the world's history. Yet whilst we have the sins and sorrows of human society on the one hand, and theological logomachies on the other, to such an extent as our daily papers and quarterly reviews testify, there is no need whatever to point out the desirability of further progress. Assuredly the greatest blessedness—which is more than happiness—of the greatest number, would seem to be most hopefully compassed by the theology which appreciates to the fullest, the assurance of Jesus concerning the Spirit, that He is ever seeking to convince men of sin, of righteousness, of judgement. For only out of such conviction will grow those opposites to the daily record of wrong, viz. purity of heart, justice in mutual intercourse, recognition of personal responsibility, self-forgetting sympathy, which are necessarily at the root of all healthy and hopeful social life.

(iv) In its most vivid manifestation, the influence of the Holy Spirit is to be found on the scale of individual character. For what is it that human nature, as each man knows it in himself and observes it in his neighbour, most needs, in order to reach the highest ideal and contribute most to the well-being of his generation? Surely it is the manifold influence of 'the power not ourselves which makes for righteousness,' in the fullest Christian sense.

So far as the actual doing of wrong is concerned, against all suggestions and inducements to ill, there is the constant need of just such restraining motives as are supplied when the word of Christ is fulfilled—'He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you.' The sinfulness of sin is never so exhibited, never so felt, as in the intensified appreciation of Gethsemane and Calvary.

When sins of omission are contemplated, if the possible good is not to be left undone, there must come some positive impulse to prompt the seizure of opportunity. Whence so really or so powerfully, as from the enhanced remembrance of what Christ Himself undertook on human behalf, when He emptied and humbled Himself? The words in which that fact is stated may indeed be endlessly repeated to no effect. But if only Christ's promise is fulfilled, 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance,' they must flame with a meaning and burn with an intensity that puts selfish indolence to shame.

In the midst of life's mysteries of pain and evil, its tribulations, conflicts, bereavements, what do all human hearts, that have not gravitated to the brute, need more than comfort? 'This sense of abandonment,' cried Strauss, 'is something awful!' And well he might.

> O, we poor orphans of nothing, alone on a lonely shore,
> Born of the brainless nature that knew not at all what she bore;
> Trusting no longer that earthly pain shall bear heavenly fruit;
> Come from the brute poor souls, no souls, to die with the brute.

From such a wreck of the heart's tenderest feelings, and collapse of humanity's noblest hopes, the word of Christ happily saves all who are taught by the Spirit

what His Resurrection means and involves. It is little wonder that the Revisers shrank from removing the name 'Comforter,' in the familiar verses which have so long been hallowed by tears beyond all human comforting.

Assuredly, whilst human life remains, with its inevitable cares and fears and burdens, there will be abundant room for the work of the Holy Spirit who is so tenderly and truly called the 'Helper,' the 'Friend in need,' of all who fight the good fight of faith and strive to be faithful to the end. The doctrine of the Spirit of power will always be essential to Christianity, so long as Christianity is of value to humanity.

> Mighty Spirit, dwell with me,
> I myself would mighty be;
> Mighty so as to prevail
> Where unaided man must fail.
> Ever, by a mighty hope,
> Pressing on and bearing up.

The theology which does not find true embodiment in such a prayer, is neither true to Christ nor sufficient for His disciples.

(6) But these elements of the whole case thus merely outlined, must all be brought together and fused into a living unity of thought, if any approach to justice is to be done to Christ's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It involves truth too true, too tender, too solemn, too precious, to be toyed with in isolated or technical terms. It has to be seen with the 'eyes of the heart,' even more than with those of the mind. What does it really mean? Every hour of every day,

everywhere, God Himself, the living and eternal Spirit, in contact with my very self, watching, waiting, yearning, doing everything that can be done to a free moral being to reinforce me against evil, to inspire me towards all good, to comfort me in life's dark mysteries of pain with the assurance of the reliability of Christ's promise concerning the light to come! Is this all true? That is the question of questions, concerning which we may say, at least, that all the modern sneering at theology does not make the Christian answer untrue.[1] Many, alas! very many, may be as insensible to such truth as our bodies are to the atmospheric pressure of fifteen pounds on every square inch of their surface. But every breath we draw serves to prove that it is there. So is all the good on earth the pledge of His pressing nearness and actual co-working, of whom the New Testament so unequivocally speaks. When the unconscious co-operation with Him becomes conscious in all humanity, heaven and earth will be one.

It is true, tragically true, that here is the sphere in which the name Advocate finds its genuine application. The Advocate—*advocatus*[2]—is the Friend in need who cannot do all He would unless He is welcomed,

[1] Thus Dr. Stanton Coit, as a specimen, in the *Christian Commonwealth*: 'No young man who has ever gone through a course of theological study, which puts out the very eyes of reason, could come to see the truth.' Such gibes have no more truth in them than modesty or courtesy. The deepest, most precious, most certain, most potent realities of even our present human life, are not perceived with 'the very eyes of reason' at all.

[2] *Advocatus*: 'one who is called to another in order to give him aid'—White and Riddle's *Latin Dictionary*.

called in to help. This is the part of the human soul. But it is absolutely essential to Christianity that there should be such a Friend to call upon. We note, of course, as Christians, what other philosophies suggest. For instance, it is declared in the name of some recent Ethical Societies, that 'We worship the Moral Ideal, and therefore it is wrong to say we have no God, no Saviour. I gave a course of lectures in which I declared that the Moral Ideal is the only true and living God.'[1] But we reply, with the 'very eyes' and ears of reason open, that such language is but a jumble of meaningless words. Religious terms like 'God' and 'worship' may indeed be emptied of their true contents, and then anything will go into them. But that is only playing with sounds. In reality, both as to mind and heart, no moral ideal, whether spelt with a capital letter or not, can be worshipped under any conditions. Nor can God be merely the moral ideal, without ceasing to be God.

It is the very essence of Christianity's message to

[1] Dr. Stanton Coit, reported in the *Christian Commonwealth*. When he adds that 'Mr. Campbell says this over and over again, and he says there is no other God,' it is but another instance of the old maxim 'Save us from our friends.' Mr. Campbell says nothing of the kind. Here are his words: 'At the heart of the universe reigns One with the heart of a little child.' Again, 'And we may say with the Quaker poet of America:

> Now my spirit sighs for home,
> And longs for light whereby to see;
> And like a weary child has come,
> O Father, unto Thee.'

The 'ethical philosophy' which can see no difference between a living, loving Father, and the Moral Ideal, should be silent until it has studied elementary psychology.

humanity that we have not only to deal with God, but that in dealing with Him we are in spirit-contact with a Person who, even as our earthly friends, must be acknowledged, welcomed, trusted, if His help is to be availing. Nay, more. As the tenderest friendship and love of earth may be wounded, thwarted, and by persistent scorning quenched, so may God Himself, as the 'Friend in need' ever patiently waiting on humanity according to the promise of Jesus, be grieved, scorned,[1] quenched, until He is banished from the very world of consciousness which He yearns to illumine. But when the sun is shut out, only perpetual night remains. That is, according to Christian theology, sin unto death; and other 'unpardonable sin' there is none.

But the opposite to this, the constant recognition of His nearness, with all consequent impulses towards the production of that holy character which is the great end and aim of all Christian theology, are best expressed in prayer which makes appeal to His personality:

> O Breath of God, breathe on us now,
> And move within us while we pray;
> The spring of our new life art Thou,
> The very light of our new day.

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[1] Heb. x. 29: 'How much severer punishment, think you, will he be held to deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has insulted the Spirit from whom comes grace' (Weymouth). Whoever may have been the writer of this Epistle, such language shows that he, quite as plainly as the author of the Fourth Gospel, regarded the personality of the Spirit as on the same level of reality with that of the Son of God.

VII

HOLINESS—THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER-ESSENTIAL

'With what noble pride does Athenagoras contrast the effects of the teaching of philosophers with those that follow from the Christian faith! "Among us," he writes, 'you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who if they are unable to prove in words the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth. They do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck they do not strike again; when robbed they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves." If we turn to the earliest of all the apologists, Justin Martyr, we find like passages in abundance; for instance: "We who formerly delighted in fornication now embrace chastity; we who used magical arts dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and of possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock and communicate to every one in need. We who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not use a common hearth and fire with them of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavour to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all."'

Prof. A. S. Wilkins, *The Light of the World*, p. 188.

VII

HOLINESS—THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER-ESSENTIAL

'I say unto you that except your righteousness, goodness, shall *exceed* that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye will certainly not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. If ye are courteous to your brethren only—what *extra* do ye ?' MATT. v. 20, 47.

SOME little time since, Professor Harnack caused no small stir in religious circles by asking and answering the question—What is Christianity ? To many avowed Christians it seemed that the inquiry was as unnecessary as the answer was unsatisfactory. But both, as we have already noted, find a more recent echo, with additions, in the movement which styles itself 'The New Theology.' The mantle of the German Professor has fallen upon our well-known and highly esteemed English pastor, and large claims are being made for that particular representation of Christianity which finds favour with his friends.

By way of introducing this new system, which proclaims itself to be the development of the immanence of God on the lines of monistic idealism,[1] strongly

[1] 'The divine immanence, alike neglected by the agnostic philosophy of the last generation and by the theology against which Agnosticism proved so damaging, furnishes that basal certainty from which the new theology deduces its whole system' (*The New Evangel*, Dr. Warschauer, p. 62).

pessimistic views concerning the present position and influence of Christianity are enunciated. We are told that 'the plain bald fact remains, that the Churches as such are counting for less and less in civilization in general, and our own nation in particular.'[1] We are said to be 'witnessing the melancholy spectacle of a whole civilization breaking away from the faith out of which it grew.' It is further asserted that 'The greatest of all the causes of the drift from the Churches, is the fact that Christian truth has become associated in the popular mind with forms of statement which thoughtful men find it impossible to accept, not only on intellectual, but even on moral grounds.'[2]

Accordingly, the pages that then follow represent an earnest and doubtless sincere attempt to translate into representations which are for this generation decidedly new, the old watchwords of Christian theology. The ordinary reader, unfamiliar with the notions of immanence and idealism, will find only suggestions of Pantheism and Unitarianism. This estimate, however, the author strongly resents. His protests may well be commended to those Agnostics, and members of Ethical Societies, who so loudly claim the writer as one of themselves. He should surely know his own mind better than they do. But the point we are regretfully obliged to make here, is that whatever else this scheme may be or may not be, it is not Christianity. Two considerations alone—though there are many others—would suffice to justify such a verdict.

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 6.
[2] ib., p. 8.

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(i) The whole purpose of this well-intended effort is manifestly to make out conceptions, ideals, doctrines, sanctions, that are entirely natural. When such an effort succeeds, Christianity is gone. Something will remain; and it may be more or less good. But it is not Christianity, because from beginning to end Christianity is supernatural. If it be not that, it is the world's greatest lie. The precise connotation of these terms 'supernatural' and 'natural' has been sufficiently explained elsewhere.[1] The essence of the case is not affected by the modern extension of the meaning of the latter.[2] The supernatural may be sufficiently defined as that part of nature which is beyond us. Some theology may be only concerned with the natural; certainly Christianity is concerned with that which is beyond all our knowledge of nature. For it, the main matter is 'that every man, in all his development, should keep the idea of nature as a background over against which he can sanely and distinctly realize his higher world—the supernatural.'[3]

[1] See *The Miracles of Unbelief*, by the present writer, p. xxv. &c.

[2] 'Thus it appears that in our modern world the old position of the natural and the supernatural is reversed exactly. The natural world is no longer conceived as a limited and narrow sphere surrounded by the boundless expanse of the supernatural. It is nature which is the all-embracing term, and the supernatural is the name we give to a certain portion of this vast territory' (*Christian Theology in Outline*, Dr. W. A. Brown, p. 226). We may give it what name we please, but it is still that which is beyond us—beyond what to us is natural.

[3] *The Christian Faith*, Prof. O. A. Curtis, p. 80. In this volume, which bears plain marks of being the work of an original thinker, the following also is worth noting: 'The supernatural. Before we try to analyse religion, we need to come somewhat closer to this tempest-tossed term "supernatural." What is the supernatural,

Scientifically the bounds of the natural are, we know, continually being enlarged. But that does not affect, let alone diminish, the scope of the supernatural. If the divine immanence is to be taken as the latest theological expression of the natural realm, then the divine transcendence would be the representative of the supernatural. And whilst Christian theism insists that, on sound philosophical lines, the immanence of God is itself unthinkable without the transcendence, so is true Christian theology obliged to maintain that the Christianity which has not its roots in the super-natural, is a misnomer and a delusion. The Christianity which is to deserve the name and abide, can only be defined as a super-natural life, proceeding from super-natural motives, drawn from a creed which is based on super-natural facts.

Such a definition will doubtless seem to justify the scorn which is so liberally poured upon theologians by the latest theology.[1] But scorn proves nothing. It may,

as man understands it ? I answer, the infinite mystery beyond the organism of nature. Nature includes only what happens within the range of common individual seizure. In other words, the idea of nature is a relative and not an absolute truth ' (p. 80).

[1] ' The professional theologian takes himself very seriously, sniffs and sneers at any suggestion of deviation from the accepted standards ; mounts some denominational chair or other, and thunders forth his view of the urgent necessity for rehabilitating truth in the grave-clothes of long-buried formulas. He hardly dares to disinter the formulas themselves—that would not be convenient even for him—but he goes on flapping the shroud as energetically as ever, and the world does not even take the trouble to laugh.' And yet the writer of this himself publishes *The New Theology* (see pp. 10, 258) as a ' connected and systematic statement.' Wherein, then, does he differ from ' the professional theologian ' ? Would it be in any sense helpful, if those who hold other conceptions than his were thus recklessly to represent him as merely a shroud-flapper ?

indeed, point to something, or some one, too good for ordinary appreciation. There were those who said concerning the Christ of the Gospels—'He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye Him?'

(ii) This also is certain, that Christianity is a life, a character, not a creed, even though the creed be necessary and conducive to the character. From the New Testament we get one word which fully and finally expresses this character. The latest theology can find no place for it. It is, indeed, never even mentioned. Yet a living human body without a normal heart is more thinkable than a universal, or national, or ecclesiastical Christianity, without that *holiness* of individual character upon which both Christ Himself and the apostles laid more stress than on anything else whatever. Has, then, neo-Christianity discovered some clearer, stronger, more comprehensive, more effective term, that it never under any circumstances speaks of 'holiness,' or calls men to a 'holy' life?

The immediate reply will probably be that there is nothing in a term, and that the substance of the Christian ideal is expressed when it is avowed that 'The new theology movement is primarily a moral and spiritual movement. It is one symptom of a great religious awakening which in the end will reinspire civilization with a living faith in God, and the spiritual meaning of life.'[1] All who are Christians indeed will welcome such a promise, and will gladly appreciate the stress which is laid upon unselfish love as the ideal to be attained. But in the face of the stubborn

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 263.

realities of human nature,[1] the questions *why* and *how* such a regeneration of civilization is to be brought about, irrepressibly arise and refuse to be stilled. Genuine Christianity answers the question '*why*?'—by reference to all the moral realities contemplated in the preceding sections. It meets the query '*how*?'—in insisting upon the reality of holiness.

In so doing it is not likely to win much modern applause. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a word in the language of to-day which is less attractive to the average citizen of this country. Not only has it associations which are often far from winsome, but it is made the subject of gibes and sneers innumerable, whenever any opportunity occurs, by the foes of Christianity. The latest popular ebullition runs in this fashion: 'Holiness! For shame. The word is obnoxious. It has stood so long for craven fear, for exotistical (sic) inebriation, for selfish retirement from the trials and buffets and dirty work of the world.'[2]

[1] The magnitude of the difficulty could scarcely be more forcefully put than by the author of *The New Theology*, p. 163, on the two somewhat strange pages beginning, 'It is time we had done with unreal talk about sin. Sin is the murder spirit in human experience.' Just so. But it is impossible to correlate this with the former assertion that 'Evil is a negative, not a positive term' (p. 43). One must say that if murder be not positive wrong, nothing is. So, too, if it be true that 'The terrible damning lie which is stifling religion to-day is the lie which crucified Jesus, the lie that spiritual pride can ever interpret God to a needy world' (p. 164)—to represent this as merely the absence of humility, is but jugglery with words. It is precisely the positiveness of sin—or as the apostle put it, the sinfulness of sin—that this new theology never faces at all.

[2] *God and my Neighbour*, R. Blatchford, p. 193. For a succinct examination of the rest of the false and foolish tirade out of which this is taken, see *Clarion Fallacies* (Hodder & Stoughton), p. 192.

A dozen other following paragraphs, of a similar kind, scarcely suffice to convey the writer's splenetic fury at the notion of such a cure for social ills. Such an outburst is typical of much more elsewhere, to the same effect.

As to the ethical worth of holiness, that may be considered presently. Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that vast numbers of modern men would share the just-quoted sentiments. Society generally would nod approval. And even in the Churches are to be found hosts of adherents, who, even if they shrank from echoing such vituperation, would all the same decline to regard holiness as the one final aim of their religion, or take seriously any suggestion of its sufficiency as the panacea for the ills of humanity.

And yet how different an estimate ought to be formed concerning the connotation of this much-abused and greatly neglected Christian term, may be gathered from an unexceptional, because wholly impartial, source. The words of Sir John Seeley [1] are familiar to students, but by no means to all thoughtful readers. For the sake of the latter they shall be here transcribed, for they are worthy of reiteration. 'That the fruits of a Christianity so hollow should be poor and sickly, is not surprising. But that Christ's method, when rightly applied, is really of mighty force, may be shown by an argument which the severest censor of Christians will hardly refuse to

[1] Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge. See *Ecce Homo*, edition of 1903, p. 193. It is also now published in Macmillan's sixpenny series.

admit.[1] Compare the ancient with the modern world. Look on this picture and on that. One broad distinction in the characters of men forces itself into prominence. Among all the men of the ancient heathen world, there are scarcely one or two to whom we might venture to apply the epithet "holy." In other words, there were not more than one or two, if any, who, besides being virtuous in their actions, were possessed with an unaffected enthusiasm of goodness, and besides abstaining from vice, regarded even a vicious thought with horror. Probably no one will deny that in Christian countries *this higher-toned goodness which we call holiness* has existed. Few will maintain that it has been exceedingly rare. Perhaps the truth is that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ, where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation, that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself. And if this be so, has Christ failed, or can Christianity die? '

Such words are even more weighty to-day than when they were first written, nearly half a century ago. All that is transpiring in civilization warrants the italics we have employed above. It is not by theology, whether old or new, but by holiness, that

[1] Here Prof. Seeley is too optimistic. Had he been sufficiently acquainted with modern anti-Christian literature, he would have known that there are some censors of Christianity to-day to whom anything and everything that can be said not only on behalf of Christians, but also of Christ Himself, is either met with callous indifference or dismissed with abusive contempt.

Christianity, as a religion, ultimately stands or falls. In the past, it has succeeded or failed just in the degree in which it has, or has not, made men holy. In the future, its fate turns not upon any theology, whether more or less intellectually acceptable to modern minds, but upon the extent to which Christian Churches, by sheer force of example, become, or do not become, the world's teachers of holiness.

In dealing, therefore, with the essentials of Christianity, there are at least five aspects of this matter which merit most careful attention. There are misrepresentations to be removed ; a right understanding to be outlined ; positive principles to be made plain ; a necessity to be enforced ; genuine sufficiency to be demonstrated.

(1) Misrepresentations to be Corrected

(i) To the grossest of these, as recently put before the people, we have already referred. Were it not for the modern atmosphere, no further notice need be taken of such cartoons. But the ever-cheapening Press of our time tends to develop superficiality and plausibility, on this as on other themes, to an amazing degree. Hence many are led into notions hereupon which are just as false as they are made to be repulsive.[1]

[1] The appeal to the people just mentioned says ' Holiness ! Give us common sense and common honesty, and a steady supply of men and women who can be trusted with small sums.' If the writer's Socialistic Utopia should ever come to pass, there will be abundant need of men who can be trusted also with large sums. But every fair-minded student of the New Testament knows perfectly well that if in its sense a man is holy, he can be trusted with anything,

It must suffice, now, to say plainly, that if any man does think that 'dreamy self-centred emotionalism' constitutes Christian holiness, he has only himself to blame for his delusion. No honest mind can extract such a pietistic monstrosity from the teachings of Christ or His apostles.

(ii) For which reason it is quite irrelevant to point to what has been said in sermons, religious periodicals, tracts, and booklets. No doubt these have often expressed themselves foolishly. Sometimes, perhaps, a mawkish unrealness has so saturated the whole representation with sentimental subjectivity, that every man or woman who has to fight for daily bread has been rather repelled than inspired by such counsels. It is greatly to be regretted. But it does not for a moment justify popular scorn, or religious indifference. Because the true ideal is always close at hand for every honest student.

(iii) Nor is the objector warranted when practical disappointment becomes even more impressive than theoretical mistake. There need be no concealing the

great or small, absolutely and always. But we read again. 'Holiness! Cant, rant and fustian! The nations are rotten with dirty pride and dirty greed, and mean lying, and petty ambitions, and sickly sentimentality.' Maybe. But which of these is either due to or in any way whatever truly associated with holiness? Every honest-minded man knows that not one of them is. Is not, then, the rant and cant on the part of the writer of such a cartoon? Especially when, with the very next sentence, he virtually contradicts himself in saying 'Holiness! Your religion does not make it. Its ethics are too weak, its theories too unsound, its transcendentalism too thin.' Whether these last clauses are true or false, the fact is manifest that this writer here first declares that holiness is too bad for anything but contempt; and then that it is too good to be produced by Christianity!

fact that some professors of special holiness are found, in actual life, very disagreeable people to deal with. An avowal of holiness may quite possibly be accompanied by pride, touchiness, discourtesy, selfishness, ill-temper, &c. But these all, so far from justifying any rejection of the principles of Christian holiness, only serve to show with added emphasis, how greatly they are needed.

It may, in general, be confessed, that both as to preaching and practice, it is only too often true that Christian Churches have failed, and do yet fail, to make men around them see 'the beauty of holiness.' Sweeping cynicisms apart,[1] it may be sadly owned that the Christian Church has not proved, to the degree that might have been expected, 'the salt of the earth' and the 'light of the world.' But no one mentally and morally worthy of regard, questions the truthfulness of Strauss, and Mill, and Renan, and other able unbelievers, when they eulogize the influence of Jesus. Who has ever been able to deny Mr. Lecky's oft-quoted

[1] 'I submit that Christianity does not make men lead better lives than others who are not Christians, and there are none so abjectly afraid of death as Christians are' (*God and my Neighbour*, p. 171). The falsity of the latter statement needs no exposure. As to the first assertion, on the scale of history it may be compared with Prof. Seeley's judgement above. So far as individual character is concerned, this writer is in no sense qualified to judge.

[2] 'Nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life' (J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion*, cheap ed. p. 107).

'Thou shalt become the corner stone of humanity, insomuch that to tear Thee from this world would be to shake it to its very foundations. No more shall men distinguish between Thee and God' (Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, 1864, v. 459).

estimate when, writing as a Rationalist, he affirms that 'Three short years of active life,' in His case, have been ever since then the world's mightiest moral dynamic? Where, then, it may well be asked, has been the corresponding influence of His avowed followers through the ages? Did He not say, 'Greater works than these shall ye do?' By individual comparison with Him they may, indeed, be as a glow-worm to the sunshine. But millions of glow-worms, all shining together, would turn night into day. Why not in modern civilization? Because, on the national let alone the universal scale, true holiness has never yet been tried.

(2) Holiness, Rightly Understood

We are here considering this great word only in reference to human nature, as an essential of Christianity. The holiness of God is a matter for reverent thought at another time, and is not a Christian essential, because a devout Jew may also contemplate it with equal sincerity. What we are here to investigate is the ethical significance of holiness, as the sum and substance of the Christian ideal for humanity.

(i) The very first thing to be outlined is its relation to goodness, as the latter is generally acknowledged. Holiness is not mere goodness, but more than goodness. It can never be too plainly stated that Christianity is not in this world to make men good. For there is already abundant goodness in the world, which is as really good as it is definitely non-Christian.

The old dreadful declamations about 'total depravity,' which meant that there was no goodness

in the world apart from Christian Churches, have largely ceased. They were never true, and in face of facts as well as of Scripture, ought never to have been uttered. Even yet, however, there is an apparent shrinking from the acknowledgement of the undeniable fact—proved openly, thousands of times over, in every country in the world—that there is goodness, real and true, in numberless cases where conversion is never thought of, and where the Christian creed is either wholly unknown [1] or definitely rejected.[2] Civilization teems with instances. Fathers brave and devoted ; mothers tender and self-sacrificing ; brothers pure and noble ; sisters gentle and true ; honest tradesmen ; careful workmen ; sailors and miners willingly risking their lives for each other ; soldiers facing duty and death together—how vast is the host of those who exhibit natural goodness, without any definite reference to Christianity at all ! This it is which not only makes human life worth living, but shows that God Himself—the fountain of all goodness, whether He be acknowledged or not—is indeed 'not far from every one of us.' The Christianity that had to lay its foundations by denying this manifest and gracious truth, would only condemn itself as egregiously false to fact.

(ii) Yet is there, rising distinctly above this, another grade of goodness which may well be termed Theistic,

[1] See Stanley's *Darkest Africa*, vol. ii., p. 345, for a touching illustration.

[2] Whatever be the religious fallacies that emanate from the *Clarion* Office and the Rationalist Press Association, it would be blind bigotry indeed to deny the goodness often manifested in the characters of the writers.

or Jewish, as expressing in general the ideal of the Old Covenant, fairly represented by the Ten Commandments associated with Moses, but finding its high-water mark in the Psalms. The superiority of this theistic goodness as compared with the natural, is doubly manifest.

First, in the definite recognition of God as the Creator and moral Ruler of the world, so that virtue becomes a matter of duty, with a divine source of obligation, instead of mere human instinct, temperament, caprice, or transient emotion. Secondly, in turning to God, the Giver of all good, with a feeling of reverent love, as different from mere sensational contentment as intelligent filial love in a child is from the animal happiness and unintelligent affection of a dog.

Sometimes this grade of goodness is underestimated, sometimes overestimated. The former is generally associated with irreligious, the latter with religious, thought. In unthinking confusion the nine negative commands and one elementary positive, which are found in Exodus, are referred to, quoted, painted up in Churches, as if they were the Christian law. And this, in spite of the fact that some of them have no application at all to the condition of things since the Christian era; one of them at least no Christian ever keeps or thinks of keeping; the others have been unmistakably left behind by Christ's own distinct direction.[1]

[1] Matt. v. 21–47. The strangest anachronism of all is in the Prayer Book of the Anglican Church, where these commandments are actually printed as an introduction to the Communion Service—a definitely Christian sacrament with which they can have no more to do than the multiplication table has with the higher mathematics.

(iii) Christian goodness—which is the synonym for holiness—only begins where the two preceding grades of goodness end. The spectacle of numbers of men and women going to public worship in church and considering themselves Christians because they keep 'the Ten commandments'—which they never do—and 'call Jesus Lord,' would be almost amusing if it were not for the world-tragedy which is involved. Professor Seeley's words are more significant than even he probably intended: 'That *higher-toned* goodness which we call *holiness*.' It is *the higher tone* which is the idiosyncrasy of Christian goodness, as distinguished from that which is either natural or theistic. For it includes both these, and a great deal more. This cannot possibly be expressed more plainly, or impressively, than in the words of Jesus Himself. 'For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what *extra* do ye?[1] do not even the Gentiles the same?'

Here two things are clear. (*a*) This '*extra*' corresponds with the cognate word preceding, in transcending the theistic ideal. 'Except your goodness shall *exceed* that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.'[2] (*b*) It also

[1] Matt. v. 47. This is the literal rendering of τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε, as first pointed out by the present writer, many years ago.

[2] Matt. v. 20. Or, as Weymouth: 'I assure you that unless your righteousness greatly surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will certainly not find entrance into the kingdom of the heavens.' The most common mistakes of ordinary interpretation here have been, either to lay no stress at all upon Christ's most emphatic word 'exceed,' or to assume that the 'Scribes and Pharisees'

corresponds with the rest of the New Testament in transcending the merely natural ideal. It is perfectly in accord with natural goodness to love those that love us; in a word, to return good for good, and also, per contra, evil for evil. It is an *extra*, beyond the natural, *super*natural, to return good for evil, and so obey the command, 'But I say unto you, love your enemies.' This is clearly echoed in the apostolic exhortation 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome the evil with goodness.' [1]

(iv) Here, then, unmistakably, is the hall-mark of holiness, and at the same time the veritable *raison d'être* of Christianity. Holiness is the goodness which surpasses all other goodness; and the one purpose of Christianity is to make men holy. The mission of Christianity amongst men is not the production of goodness, for that is here already, and was exhibited long before Christ came. It is to bring to pass that 'higher-toned goodness' which alone is, or ever will be, good enough to prevent the sins and minimize the sorrows of the human race. Whatever theology be held or rejected, this is the very essence of the gospel concerning which the Master Himself said: 'If the salt have lost its savour, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.'

It is, therefore, little wonder that in our day such questions should be put to the Churches as these: 'Are there no good, nor happy, nor worthy men and women to-day outside the pale of the Christian churches?

were all and altogether hypocrites, so that what Christ here aimed at was sincerity. Not only is this assumption false to fact, but the context plainly shows that this was not at all Christ's intention.

[1] Rom. xii. 21. Weymouth.

Amongst the eight hundred millions of human beings who do not know or do not follow Christ, are there none as happy and as worthy as any who follow Him ? ' [1] These are fair queries, and not only appeal to the people, but find ample echoes in the New Testament. The first, as we have seen, must be answered unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The second *ought* to find an equally unequivocal answer in the negative. It is the business of Christianity to exhibit such credentials. If it cannot, its vocation is gone, and all the theology in the world, whether old or new, will not maintain it. The logic of the case is clear even to ' the man in the street,' viz. that a supernatural creed —i.e. a creed definitely insisting upon the supernatural as its foundation—involves the duty of a supernatural life. And if the supernatural creed rest upon genuinely supernatural facts, then out of these there should as easily spring supernatural motives, i.e. motives drawn from more than natural sources, even as the resistless hydraulic pressure comes from the extra force communicated to the water in a suitable press. Is there anything corresponding to this in Christianity ? There is.

(v) The *extra* goodness to which the whole mission of Jesus points, as the very heart and soul of the kingdom He came to establish on earth, is always and necessarily twofold. It has reference to both God and man, and these elements of it can no more be separated than the two sides of a coin. They are thinkable, but not workable, apart. Whatever ' theological word-spinning ' there may be concerning other matters, as regards the living embodiment of these two

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 172.

elements, the maxim stands for ever, that he who is not true to both, is true to neither. It is impossible to mistake them. We have already called to mind with what practical simplicity, and yet what unparalleled and immeasurable boldness, Jesus calmly set aside that which was for the Jew the most sacred thing on earth, viz. the plain letter of the law, in order to inculcate His own unheard-of interpretations of it. The ten generally negative commandments were, in His enunciation of the two great positive commands, far more than included. They were both extended and intensified, amplified and exalted, transformed from tribal regulations to world-wide principles. These latter, indeed, claim entire sovereignty over two worlds. They completely dominate alike the invisible realm of the inmost soul where the self is ever alone and unknown, and the visible sphere of active life where each man has intercourse with his fellows.

(*a*) 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'[1] Viewed in the light of all Christ's teaching, this becomes no mere quotation from the Old Covenant, but virtually a 'new commandment,' by reason of His fuller revelation of the divine Fatherhood. He came, according to His own impressive avowal, 'not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fill them up'[2]—to complete, as with a master-hand, the outline which they had drawn

[1] Mark xii. 30, cited from Deut. vi. 4, 5.

[2] Matt. v. 17. Here the rendering 'fulfil' is quite misleading. The word πληρῶσαι entirely warrants Dr. Weymouth's phrase, 'I have not come to abrogate them, but to give them their completion.'

of the face of God towards the world. That outline was in itself often hard and unintelligible. The unmistakable 'expression'—which is the very soul of any face—of love divine, was necessarily reserved for the Son[1] who alone could portray it. But it is this clear revelation of the Father's face, as yearning over men with a love that the law and prophets could never unfold, that constitutes at once the very essence of Christ's gospel and its divine *extra* beyond all that went before. This, therefore, is the warrant of the demand of the New Covenant for responsive heart-devotion beyond all that was before expected of the pious Jew.

Holiness of heart is thus as much more than mere 'freedom from sin,' as it is above and beyond conventional religiousness. It is the positive reciprocation of actually apprehended love divine. It is commanded in the only way in which love can ever be commanded, viz. by love. So long as Christ is true, His assurance —'The Father Himself loveth you'—becomes the pressing reason which transforms the first great command into a sublime opportunity, and makes the law of the *extra* within to be the spring of real delight. To the unbeliever, of course, the idea of an ever-developing consciousness in a human spirit, of love from and love to the infinite Father, appears but fanatical subjectivity. Yet it may be quite as real as the deepening and mellowing of earth's most sacred affection between human hearts. And it is no more indefinable. But how really this inner heart-life is an *extra*, beyond the generalizings with which natural goodness may or may not refer to a 'higher Power,' or the 'fear of

[1] Heb. i. 1.

God' which filled the soul of a pious Israelite, must be left to any sincere thought to formulate.

(*b*) 'Thou shalt love thy fellow man as thou lovest thyself.'[1] Such a rendering is well warranted. For it expresses exactly what Jesus intended to do, viz. break down the tribal or national walls which made a man 'neighbour only to his own countryman,' and answered the query 'who is my neighbour?' for evermore, by the 'Go and do thou likewise' of the good Samaritan's example. It is soon said, truly. But it is little done. It is still, alike on the national and the individual scale, one of 'the things above' which human nature finds it wellnigh impossible to realize in obedience. It is truly the *extra*, above and beyond our highest natural, civil, social, moral ideals. How far beyond, may be gathered equally from careful attention to New Testament teaching, and from ordinary human life. Omitting, now, to dwell upon the former,[2] let us take one specimen of the latter from Macaulay's life of Bishop Ken. Concerning the victims of 'The Bloody Assize,' he writes: 'The chief friend of these unhappy men, was one who abhorred their religious and political opinions, one whose order they hated, and to whom they had done unprovoked

[1] Mark xii. 31. Weymouth, cited from Lev. xix. 18.

[2] But see especially the following: Matt. v. 17–48, xvi. 24–7; Mark viii. 34–8, x. 17–22; Luke xxii. 24–6; John xiii. 12–17; Rom. xii. 10–21; 1 Cor. iv. 10–14; Jas. ii. 1–13; 1 Pet. ii. 18–20. Consider also 1 Cor. vi. 1–7, 2 Cor. xii. 10, and ask where are the religious people who do as is here suggested? Are not F. D. Maurice's words too generally true?—'Nothing is more common than to meet people who emphatically describe themselves as Christians, and talk about Christianity. Nothing is more rare than men who in all their decisions and acts are guided by the Christian Spirit' (*Life*, ii. 2).

wrong—Bishop Ken. That good prelate used all his influence to soften the jailors, and retrenched from his own episcopal estate that he might be able to make some additions to the coarse and scanty fare of those who had defaced his beloved cathedral. *His conduct on this occasion was of a piece with his whole life.*' The historian did not italicize these last words, but they become immeasurably emphatic by contrast with the many other things continually occurring in Christendom, which are as far from such true holiness, such *extra* goodness, as night is from day.

This *extra* is the answer, and the only answer, to the plain questions which are being to-day ruthlessly pressed home upon conventional Christianity. 'You speak of the spiritual value of your religion. What can it give you more than Socrates, or Buddha possessed? These men had wisdom, courage, morality, fortitude, love, mercy. Can you find in all the world to-day two men as wise, as good, as gentle, as happy?'[1] Such queries are in perfect order. They are unconscious but genuine echoes of Christ's own principles. 'Unless your goodness shall greatly surpass the goodness of the Scribes and Pharisees'—who were not all hypocrites but simply embodiments of the Old Covenant grade of goodness—'ye will certainly not find entrance into the kingdom of heaven.' Both inquiries must be answered. Whether theology be old or new, is here a trifle. If the Christian religion does not give us 'more than Socrates or Buddha possessed,' it is self-condemned as a delusion.

But the genuine believer who knows anything of holiness of heart has the everlasting answer in himself.

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 172.

'For God who said—Out of darkness let light shine—is He who has shone in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory which is radiant on the face of Christ.'[1] So wrote one of old who was certainly neither fanatic nor fool. Rather was he quite as keen in mind as any of his modern critics. And his experience has been that of millions. Nor is there any room whatever for honest doubt that, as Professor Seeley hinted, there can be found 'in all the world to-day' not only two men 'as wise, and good, and happy,' as Socrates or Buddha, but myriads of men far more so. In a word, wherever there is real Christian holiness, there is the *extra*, both within and without, beyond all that these here specified had, or were, or did. As this merits all possible scrutiny, let us look at it yet more closely.

(3) Positive Principles involved

The reasons for asserting the superiority of Christian ethics, when based on holiness as outlined above, over all other systems, may be succinctly expressed in the following items.

(i) Holiness, as an ethical principle, goes to the root of the evil in human nature when it says that 'out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c., which defile the man.' This directly contradicts the modern 'determinism'[2] which would put an

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 6, Weymouth.

[2] This is never a true name. It should always be 'Determinedism,' as I have shown in the booklet entitled *Guilty* (sixpence, R. Culley), in which also the accompanying assertion here made is established by proof.

end to sin by putting an end to manhood. Holiness recognizes all the significance of heredity and environment, but insists upon the undeniable reality of the distinct and unfettered self, and reveres the consequent responsibility. Without this, all talk about ethics is but sawing the air. No automaton can ever be moral.

(ii) Holiness sets up a higher standard of duty and ideal of character than any other doctrine whatever. To compare its principles with those of Buddhism, herein, is to betray equal ignorance of the main principles of both.[1]

(iii) It is more strongly and effectively opposed to all forms and degrees of moral evil, than any other system of philosophy or ethics. It must needs be that the brightest light casts the deepest shadows. Moral evil must be more abhorrent to those who learn of Christ, than to the followers of any other faith, because the sinfulness of sin is necessarily shown up more vividly on the background of the *extra* goodness.[2]

[1] See *Clarion Fallacies*, pp. 177–80.

[2] ' Let us look, then, at the truest and best form of Christianity, and ask what it is doing ? It is preaching about sin, sin, sin ' (*God and my Neighbour*, p. 183). This is a specimen of what plausibility can do for ' the man in the street.' The truth is that : (i) Socialists also are preaching about ' sin, sin,' and no journal more than the *Clarion*. (ii) There is only too much reason for protest against wrong from any source. Civilization reeks with sin. (iii) The falsity of the statement lies in the fact that this is only part of what the ' truest and best form of Christianity ' is preaching. For it equally insists upon love, truth, and holiness. And its work is the production of these instead of sin. (iv) To ask, moreover, ' What is Christianity doing ? ' and reply only ' preaching,' is simple falsehood. Whatever be the preaching—so far as actual, present, practical help for men, women, and children, in need and sorrow is concerned, Christianity to-day is ' doing ' more than any other philanthropic agency on earth. To rail at such work is sufficient

(iv) Holiness, fairly credited with all its height and depth, covers the whole breadth of human life. Its watchword is not separation, but saturation. For it there is no 'secular' realm—'Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' This principle includes everything human.

(v) It applies equally to all human beings, without any respect of persons. Thus plainly, beyond all cavil, speaks the apostle on behalf of Christian reality: 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'[1]

(vi) It is universal in its application to all climes and times. Its influence for good is unlimited by race or country, as the history of our foreign missions has abundantly proved. It finds scope, moreover, in every condition of life. There is room for holiness

self-condemnation. Yet again, when the latest theology (Sermon by Rev. R. J. Campbell in *Christian Commonwealth* of June 27, 1907), says that 'the thought of sin has lain like a nightmare upon the Christian consciousness for many centuries, and it is time we got rid of it,'—one is obliged to hope that something good is meant. But it is no less necessary to say plainly that whatever else this may be, it is not Christianity. To 'get rid of the thought of sin' we must certainly first get rid of Christ altogether. There is no need to quote to prove that. Christian holiness intensifies the thought of sin as the noonday sun intensifies all shadows. If sin be nothing, assuredly holiness is nothing. If holiness be nothing, Christianity is not worth talking about.

[1] Compare this with Buddhism. Buddha would not for a long time admit women into his order at all, and then, when constrained to do so, predicted trouble as the result. Christ unfolded His sublimest teaching to an outcast woman; women were constantly with Him, and were amongst the earliest, as they have ever been since amongst the noblest, workers of His kingdom upon earth. Only the select few in Buddhism can really be saved. The rest must take their chance.

under all circumstances. Health, illness, strength, weakness, wealth, poverty, public life, private life, all alike afford ample opportunity for the realization of the first great command and the practice of the second, to the *extra* extent. Kings and paupers, statesmen and scavengers, queens and washer-women, could all, if they chose, be holy. What it would cost them is not here the question. There have been numberless radiant illustrations of the reality of holiness in every grade of society.

(vii) Holiness compels the most real and far-reaching philanthropy. No greater falsity can be put into print than to say 'Christianity concerns itself with God and man, putting God first and man last.'[1] For the Master Himself distinctly says concerning the second command, that it is 'like' the first, i.e. of equal obligation. And the words of the apostles to that effect are altogether too familiar to need quoting. To say, therefore, that 'The Christian religion divides its service and love between man and God'[2] is simply an instance of perverse misrepresentation. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me,' is the binding principle. Where is the division there? It is equally false to say that 'Christians give a great deal more attention to God than to man'[3] If they

[1] *God and my Neighbour*, p. 190. These statements would not be really worth noticing, but for the fact of their being thrust in cheap form into the hands of so many who believe them through not knowing better.

[2] ib., p. 190.

[3] 'If any man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar' (1 John iv. 20).

did love God more, they would love men more. To this, experience and observation alike testify.

Meanwhile, as a matter of fact, the most actual, wide-spread, constant philanthropy in the world to-day, is that which springs from the principle of Christian holiness.[1] It is too great to be tabulated, and too real to be described.

(viii) There is a common sneer, by way of reply, that all this is but palliative, and what is wanted is a curative method. That is to say, human society and human government need to be radically reformed before the better day of civilization can come. The general allegation is true. But there is a note to be made, and a question to be asked. The principles of Christian holiness tend to a much more radical reform than any political or social scheme—if only Christendom were true to them. It has been well remarked that 'The Church is in fact staggering under the discovery of how much it means to be a Christian.'[2] Much is said daily for and against Socialism as the future goal of society. And certainly no one will gainsay this utterance of the author of *God and my Neighbour*: 'Let the last be first and the first last; let

[1] From the 'record of one year's work,' in one mission only, the Manchester and Salford Mission under Rev. S. F. Collier, take the following facts. There are, in addition to all spiritual efforts, sixty-four distinct agencies for the benefit of those in need. The Homes and Shelters have provided 136,145 beds and 476,505 meals for the poor and destitute; but only the full report can even suggest the rest. What have those who sneer at Christian holiness to show that can compare with this? As a plain fact, Christian missions in this land are doing more of such real philanthropy in one week, than unbelief has done in all the centuries since the Christian era.

[2] *The Religion of a Mature Mind*, Dr. G. A. Coe, p. 381.

the strong support the weak and the great serve the small. That, it seems to me, is what we sigh for, strive for, and are ready to die for; that is what we mean when we speak, or sing, or dream of Socialism.'[1] But this is neither more nor less than the very application of Christian holiness to social life. And when, after defining 'altruism' as 'Christ's glorious gospel of love,' the writer goes on to say: 'All the mercy and patience we have in the present, and all the hope we have in the future have come of it. And let the day of Socialism be near or far, when that day arrives, Socialism also will have come of it'—no further plea is required on behalf of the radical efficacy of the principles of holiness in social matters.

But, if we are to speak practically, it is overwhelmingly manifest that the social millennium cannot possibly come by a revolution which will put all wrong things right this year. At best, it must be many years, or rather generations, before the day of universal justice and peace and brotherhood arrives. But men and women and children are in trouble of all sorts *now*. What is to be done with them, and for them, whilst the process of social evolution goes on? That is the question which is faced by the philanthropy due to Christian holiness, as by nothing else on earth. To call such good Samaritanism merely a 'palliative,' is cruel mockery. It is rather the fulfilment of Christ's word, 'This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.'

[1] '*Altruism, Christ's Glorious Gospel of Love against Man's Dismal Science of Greed*, by R. Blatchford, pp. 8, 11.

(ix) And all this the more because, whatever be the depth, and height, and breadth, of the ideal involved in Christian holiness, it contains in itself the needed source of obligation through which the ideal becomes imperative duty. Thus, taking Socialism in its best sense as the hope of the future for society, holiness may be truly defined as dynamized Socialism, i.e. the worthiest ideal, plus the strongest motive. Upon this the whole New Testament is as clear as the light of noon. One representative word exhibits all the rest. 'We make it our chief ambition, whether we live or die, to please Him perfectly.' [1]—'In everything, and in all things, have I learned the secret—I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.' [2] If, therefore, we mean by Socialism the truest and best remedy for social ills—whether Collectivism or not, is here irrelevant—the special feature and superiority of Christian Socialism, which is but holiness in its social aspect, is that it is energized from within. In a word, Christian Socialism is a matter of obligation. All other Socialism is a matter of option.[3]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 9. The special force of *φιλοτιμούμεθα* should not be missed, as pointed out above, p. 161.

[2] Phil. iv. 12. Here again the true sense of *μεμύημαι* is more fully expressed by Weymouth: 'I am fully initiated into all the mysteries. I have strength for anything through the help of Him who gives me power.'

[3] Well does Mr. Campbell say hereupon: 'Charity is no remedy for our social ills and their moral outcome; the only remedy is a new social organization on a Christian basis. I do not believe that any form of Collectivism, as a mere system superposed from without, can ever really make the world happy; it must be the expression of the spirit of brotherhood working from within' (*The New Theology*, p. 254).

The dynamic that lives in the heart of holiness was well expressed by the late Professor A. S. Wilkins when he wrote:[1] 'It was much that Christianity based morality no longer on the shifting sands of speculation, but on the revealed condition and destiny of man, and spoke with authority on the end of his life. It was much that it embraced the whole nature of man within the compass of its moral laws, and taught him to present his whole being—body, soul, and spirit—a living sacrifice which was but his reasonable service. But it was more, far more than all the rest, that it made the mainspring of all right action to consist in an enthusiasm that all might feel, that the laws of its kingdom might be known and obeyed by the meanest and humblest of its subjects.'

What, then, was and is that enthusiasm? Let our other modern Professor, far enough removed from all suspicion of mysticism, answer. 'As love provokes love, many have found it possible to conceive for Christ an attachment the closeness of which no words can describe, a veneration so possessing and absorbing the man within them that they have said "I live no more, but Christ lives in me." Now such a feeling carries with it of necessity the feeling of love for all human beings. It matters no longer what quality men may exhibit; amiable or unamiable, as the brothers of Christ, as belonging to His sacred and consecrated kind, as the objects of His love in life and death, they must be dear to all to whom He is dear.'[2] Imagine all men ruled by that enthusiasm! What

[1] *The Light of the World*, p. 148.
[2] *Ecce Homo*, Eversley ed., 1903, p. 187.

social evils, or international jealousies, would remain, to bring about either sweating or war ?

(x) There is, however, yet another idiosyncrasy of holiness which marks it out from all other ethical systems, viz. that when all their results in individual human character go for nothing, passing into a hopeless void, holiness asserts a well-grounded hope of further development, as much nobler than the present as the full-grown life of a noble man is vaster than that of the foetus in embryo. Upon this, however, no more need now be said, as it will be further considered presently.

(4) Holiness the Final Christian Necessity

The great question which emerges from the foregoing would appear to be this. In genuine Christianity, is holiness optional or obligatory ? For all sincere belief such a query cannot but be answered as soon as it is asked. Yet the practical acknowledgement of this, such as both Church and world would understand and appreciate, is of far greater import than any theological discussion. A century and a half ago John Wesley wrote : ' Let us see how matters stand at our own door. Do the people of England in general (not the highest or the lowest, for these usually know nothing of the matter, but people of middle rank) understand Christianity ? Do they conceive what it is ? Can they give an intelligible account either of the speculative or practical part ? '[1] It is to be feared that there is even more reason now than in his day for the utterance of such a

[1] Sermon cxvi.

sentiment. At all events modern Churches, speaking generally, seem as little disposed as ever to face the consequences of avowed belief in a gospel which insists, above all else, upon holiness.[1]

When it is affirmed, on behalf of the latest theology, that 'No lesser theology can consistently claim to be the gospel of the kingdom of God; systems of belief which are weighted by dogmatic considerations have not and cannot have the same power of appeal,'[2] such a claim cannot for a moment be conceded. If

[1] Methodism, for instance, professes to follow John Wesley's teachings, and his fifty-three first printed sermons are part of the recognized standard of its doctrine. How, then, will modern Methodism stand its founder's test, say in the 28th sermon? Speaking of the command 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,' Wesley says: 'But how do the Christians observe what they profess to receive as a command of the most high God? Not at all; not in any degree; no more than if no such command had ever been given to man. Even the good Christians, as they are accounted by others as well as themselves, pay no manner of regard thereto. In what Christian city do you find one man of five hundred who makes the least scruple of laying up just as much treasure as he can—of increasing his goods just as far as he is able? There are, indeed, those who would not do this unjustly; there are many who will neither rob nor steal; and some who will not defraud their neighbour; nay, who will not gain by either his ignorance or necessity. But this is quite another point. Even these do not scruple to laying up the treasure upon earth, but the laying them up by dishonesty. They do not start at disobeying Christ, but at a breach of heathen morality. So that even these honest men do no more obey His command than a highwayman or a house-breaker. Nay, they never designed to obey it. From their youth up it never entered their thoughts. There is no one instance of spiritual infatuation in the world which is more amazing than this.' With all our critical knowledge to-day, it may safely be said that no series of sermons on the Sermon on the Mount are more true to the gospel, or more outspoken than these. But what of their embodiment in practice? Where is the *extra* here truly outlined?

[2] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 255.

the 'dogmatic considerations' amount to the realization of the love of God in Jesus Christ, to such an extent as to make His two great commands obligatory, then the more systems of belief are 'weighted' with them, the better for humanity. The religious tragedy seems rather to be that conventional Christianity so often is, as Wesley said, not weighted with them at all.

Nor is it any more true to say that 'In fact the Labour Party is itself a Church, for it represents the getting together of those who want to bring about the kingdom of God.'[1] For that is precisely what so many in the Labour Party do not want to do. They simply want to bring about the kingdom of man. They believe in the second great command, but are quite content to dismiss the first as a doubtful trifle, or a hindering bugbear.[2] This is exactly where the unequivocal protest of Christian holiness comes in. It says, without any mitigation, but with myriads of facts as support, that however much the second may be necessary and desired, it never yet has been on the social scale fulfilled, and it never will be, without the first. All talk about the love of God hindering the love of man is as senseless, to say nothing about its anti-Christian animus, as to denounce the steam for hindering the engine, or the dynamo for preventing the electric current.

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 255.

[2] Thus *God and my Neighbour* (p. 190), at least representing the *Clarion* section of the Labour Party, and not a few others: 'He who serves God and man, will not serve man as effectually as he who gives himself wholly to the service of man.' The statement is false, but it also shows how misleading is the assertion quoted above.

(5) The Sufficiency of Holiness

If the keen critic of to-day chooses to find fault with Christianity as it is exhibited in ordinary Christendom, there is, alas! only too real justification for severe indictment. The kinematograph, if faithfully used, would reveal many strange and disappointing spectacles. But it would be quite wasted effort so far as the vital principles of Christianity are concerned. All that is demonstrated by such scrutiny is that the Church, almost as much as the world, needs far more Christian reality, in thought and word and deed.

It cannot, of course, be denied that the word 'holiness' is unattractive. To half-believers, as to unbelievers, it is actually repellent. But is that a sufficient reason for dismissing it from employment? Does the high ideal for which it stands become any less essential or potent? It is, as a term, no more 'obnoxious' to one portion of society than the term 'Socialism' is to another and even larger section of the community. Whether, however, that name is for such a reason going to be dropped, and the principles it represents waived, any one with open eyes to-day can see. Is there not, then, as much in Christian holiness when rightly understood, to value, maintain, defend, as in any scheme of social reform? Only avowed anti-Christians will question this. For all to whom the New Testament speaks with any authority, it is beyond controversy that holiness is the absolute and unmistakable law of Christ. It alone expresses the distinctive type of character which Christianity is above all else bound to develop. It alone embodies the ultimate aim of all Christian

doctrines and the true measure of the worth of Christian organizations. It alone constitutes the very essence and hope of the only Socialism that is worth thinking of or contending for.[1]

Here, then, we have the real and final standard of value for the Christian faith, and expression of the sufficiency of Christian principles for the salvation of the world. Whatever becomes of theology, whether it be old or new, orthodox or heterodox, without holiness—the *extra* goodness which draws from the actuality of love divine ceaseless inspiration for unbounded human love—Christianity is a name and nothing more. The following claim was, a few years since, urged under specially impressive circumstances, on behalf of the distinctive teaching to this effect of one branch of the Church Catholic. If Christ be true, if through the Church the world is ever to be in any real sense 'saved,' ought it not to be equally applicable to all?

'In our Church holiness is the very point from which we view all theology. Now listen; I want that to be understood. Knowing exactly what I say, and taking the full responsibility of it, I repeat, we are the only Church in history from the apostles' time until now, that has put forward as its very elemental thought

[1] 'Never without the impetus of human love can Socialism be established. Losing the sentiment of human love, it could not last. Reduced to a mechanical system of cold justice and economic organization, it would become more hateful and much less endurable than the anarchy which now prevails. That sort of Socialism is not worth fighting for. I, for one, would not waste an hour nor lift a hand in the service of such a bloodless, soulless, inhuman creed.' (Mr. R. Blatchford, *Altruism*, &c., p. 6).

the great central pervading idea of the whole Book of God from the beginning to the end—the holiness of the human soul, heart, mind, and will. It may be called fanaticism, but that is our mission. If we keep to that, the next century is ours; if we keep to that, the triumphs of the next century will throw those that are past into the shade. Our work is a moral work—that is to say, the work of making men holy.'[1]

'If we keep to that'—surely this is the great 'if' of Christianity.

[1] See *The Christian Faith*, by Prof. O. A. Curtis, p. 372.

VIII

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

'The significance of the sacraments depends not upon the circumstances of their origin, but upon their inherent nature as rites adapted to illustrate the truths of the gospel, and consecrated by centuries of Christian association and experience. Yet, however tender and sacred the associations which gather about these special acts, it is none the less true that the sacraments fulfil their true function only as they help us to carry into all of life such a sense of God's presence and power as to make all that we do alive with spiritual meaning. As the true Christian ideal of the ministry is realized not through the destruction of the idea of the priesthood, but through its enlargement till it takes in all humanity, so it should be in the case of the sacrament. What is true of baptism and the Supper, as ecclesiastical acts, should be true of every washing and of every eating. The true Christian sacrament is life itself; and every deed done in the spirit of Christ should be an outward sign of the inward grace received from God through Him.'

Dr. W. A. Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, pp. 406, 407.

VIII

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

'And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

MATT. xxviii. 18, 19.

'For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks He brake it and said, This is My body which is for you; this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.'

1 COR. xi. 23–26.

ARE any sacraments essential to Christianity? The manifest omission of all reference to them by the latest theology,[1] combines with the utter disregard manifested by Quakers and Unitarians, and the practical ignoring of myriads of professing Christians,

[1] The only reference I have seen is one in the *Christian Commonwealth*, by Dr. Warschauer, where, after giving a brief statement of the meaning of Baptism, substantially the same as that which here follows, he adds 'Essential, or necessary, it, of course, is not.'

to answer this question in the negative. The stress, on the other hand, put upon them by the Roman, Greek, and Anglican Churches, is too well known to require emphasis. Perhaps their case can scarcely be better put into words than by Canon Paget. 'St. Paul appeals to Baptism and the Eucharist as both effecting and involving the communion of saints. By Sacraments men are to be taken out of the narrowness and isolation of their own lives, out of all engrossing preoccupation with their own state into the ampler air, the generous gladness, the unselfish hope of the City of God; they are to escape from all daily pettiness, all morbid self-interests, all preposterous conviction of their own importance, into a fellowship which spans all ages and all lands. And even those who stand aloof from them and from the faith on which they rest, may feel the unmatched greatness of an act that has held its place in human life through all the revolutions of more than 1,800 years, an act that in its essential characteristics is to-day what it was when imperial Rome was venerated as eternal; an act that is every day renewed, with some measure at least of the same faith and hope and love, in every land where Christ is owned.'[1]

If this were simply the truth and the whole truth of the case, it would be difficult indeed to refuse such an ideal. But alas! facts have to be reckoned with. These point only too vividly to a wide departure from this sketch, and from the divine intention which it fairly represents. In regard to both the sacraments here mentioned, the very rites which Christ Himself ordained as a bond of union amongst His followers

[1] *Lux Mundi*, p. 419.

have become the symbols of sharpest division and bitterest controversy. Thousands of avowed Christians would never dream of meeting their fellow Christians at 'The Lord's Table.' And altogether apart from baptismal regeneration, the exclusiveness of the 'Particular Baptist' has passed into a proverb.

It is therefore little wonder that by those outside the Churches the Christian Sacraments are generally despised, whilst by many within the pale of Christendom they are almost as often lamentably ignored. Such attitudes do not come to pass without cause. If the Christian sacraments seem to-day to the popular view to be only a compound of mysticism, sacerdotalism, pietism, and fanaticism, some one is responsible. Assuredly such is not the New Testament representation. To it, therefore, let us turn for answer to our query, whether, or in what sense, sacraments are essential to Christianity. Whatever theologies have formulated, or ecclesiasticism has practised, the teachings of Christ and His apostles remain for our final guidance. Two preliminary inquiries will lead us to the succinct consideration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

I. What is a Sacrament ?

Only the religious world to-day has any use for this term. And even here its employment is so restricted that whilst some are styled Sacramentarians, others no more use the term than they heed the thing signified.

The word 'sacrament' is confessedly not found in the New Testament. But at the time of the Christian

era 'sacramentum' carried three shades of meaning. (i) It was the deposit laid down by each of the two parties to a law-suit—that of the loser being afterwards forfeited to religious uses. (ii) It indicated the military oath of allegiance. (iii) By extension through popular usage it grew to signify an oath, or solemn engagement of any kind. Its adoption by Christian theology came about quite naturally.

Christ's own words in regard to Baptism and the Supper were alike simple, deep, and authoritative. After His Resurrection, undoubtedly, they gathered reverent emphasis. Then, in accordance with the workings of the religious instinct in human nature, they became associated with mysterious solemnity. Thus the Christian service, influenced by the rising tide of ecclesiasticism, gradually became akin to such rites as the Eleusinian Mysteries.[1] Hence also the term 'mysteries' came soon to be applied to the Lord's Supper. To this the Romish Church put the finishing touch, by adopting 'sacramentum' as the Latin equivalent for the Greek *μυστήριον*.[2] Thus sacrament and mystery became one, and paved the way first for priestly assumption and then for Papal claims.

This connexion has remained, in spite of the great rupture at the Reformation, until now. To the larger

[1] Paul's own word, mentioned above as used in writing to the Philippians, *μεμύημαι*, 'I have been initiated,' shows how the thought of these was present to the early Christian mind.

[2] 'This kindred word (to *μεμύημαι*) *μυστήριον* is used by Paul to represent the great truths hidden from eternity in the divine counsels and revealed to believers. Eph. i. 9; iii. 3, 4, 9; Col. i. 26, ii. 2 &c. (Dr. Vincent in the *Internat. Crit. Commentary* on Phil. iv.12).

half of Christendom, such association yet holds good. Modern influences, however, are here also definitely disintegrating. The mystical, the sacerdotal, the pietistic, the fanatical, are so manifestly becoming of less and less account for this generation, that the pressing question in regard to the sacraments comes to be, What is left when these elements are subtracted ? Is it sufficient, even if they are essential, to speak of the sacraments as ' means of grace ' ? And if it be, what is the true significance of such a phrase when rightly understood ?

It cannot be concealed that we have herein to face strong extremes of differing Christian conviction. Nor is there any *a priori* reason why one set of such convictions should be treated as valid, whilst the rest are rejected. The Romanist and the Anglican have as much right to a hearing as the Baptist or the Quaker. But Protestantism has given ample reasons for putting aside the Romish dogma that a sacrament produces its effect *ex opere operato*, i.e. necessarily, by the mere performance of the act. No anathema attached to the denial of this can lessen its contradiction to the mind of Christ herein. Such a conception is, in truth, a purely mechanical one, just as, when the electric light is turned on, it matters not who does it, or who is in the room. If the witness of the New Testament is not perfectly plain against such a notion, as touching the Christian sacraments, language becomes altogether unintelligible and meaningless.

Much to the same effect speaks modern Anglicanism. ' To be living a life received, nourished, characterized

by Baptism and the Eucharist, this is the distinctive note of a Christian, thus does he differ from other men.' This cannot but be regarded as a strange substitution of the means for the end.

Between extremes we may look for truth. If men of thought turn sharply from the foregoing, yet—in the terms of Dr. W. B. Pope's gentle sarcasm—to 'honour the spiritual character of the religion of Christ by dispensing with His own express appointments' is surely an error, whether it be new theology or old. It is as much more natural as scriptural to say that these sacraments 'were ordained by Christ Himself to be to His people what the emblems of the law were to the Jews—tokens and pledges of His grace; the only permanent, unchangeable, and universal institutions; their simple rites being established for ever; their outward observance being the badges of Christian profession, and their inward blessing to faith being the assurance of the grace they signify.'[1]

In between the unnatural disregard of transcendent love's last command, and the superstitious exaggeration of simplicity into thaumaturgy, comes the true scope for a genuine believer's reverent obedience and thankful love. These, as the human reciprocation of love divine, make the essence of a Christian sacrament. As embodying and intensifying these, how can Baptism and the Lord's Supper be less than essential to Christianity? To affirm that they are essential is neither to involve an anathema nor to plead for mysticism, but simply to put right estimate upon reality.

[1] *A Higher Catechism of Theology*, Dr. W. B. Pope, p. 333.

II. How many Sacraments?

It is well known that the Romish Church announces seven sacraments. In addition to the two almost universally recognized by Christian believers, the following are put forth: Confirmation, Orders, Penance, Marriage, Extreme Unction. There is no need here to dwell upon this list. 'Penance' is out of place altogether, seeing that such a practice, as distinct from repentance, is not even suggested anywhere in the New Testament. Nor is there any warrant whatever for 'Extreme Unction.' The passage of Scripture mentioned in connexion with it,[1] gives no warrant whatever for such a rite, as even a child can see. As for the three others, it is quite right that they should be regarded with thoughtful reverence. But as sacraments these seven are only ecclesiastical after-thoughts. They were not definitely asserted until the year 1124, by Otto of Bamberg. Nor did they receive authoritative sanction until two hundred years after. A century later they were confirmed by the Council of Trent. Unless a special and narrow definition be given to the term 'sacrament,' they all plainly fall short of any title to that name.

The two which alone have the clear enforcement of the New Testament, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The least reflection upon these, in the light of Scripture, shows their analogy with the two Old Covenant rites of circumcision and the Passover. No sincere mind can miss the corresponding significance. The New Covenant needed, equally with the Old, its

[1] Jas. v. 14, 15.

symbols of entrance and of true membership. These are given with helpful sufficiency in the two sacraments which the whole of the early Christian Church unquestionably recognized. The added five answer to no such need. Neither as token of entrance into Christ's kingdom, nor as pledge of faithful membership, has any one of them the right to be called a sacrament. They rest manifestly upon mere ecclesiastical authority, and as such need not here receive further consideration.

III. Baptism

In the light of Christian theology four estimates of this sacrament are possible.

(1) It may be regarded as a mere symbolic act, serving only a temporary and accidental purpose in the early Church—with no permanent significance nor perpetual obligation.

(2) It may be pronounced the indispensable condition of Christian life, and the absolute test of membership in the Christian Church. In this case it becomes an ordeal which they alone can pass who with their whole mind and heart take Christ for their Saviour and Master.

(3) Under the notion of 'baptismal regeneration' it may be enforced as the mystical but necessary means of bringing about salvation. In this case a priest is required for the performance of the rite, and the authority of the apostolical succession is generally invoked.

(4) Baptism may be accepted as the Christ-taught initiatory sign and seal of the New Covenant, including

therefore not only old but young, and binding alike on all in the sacredness of its sanctions, as long as the Church on earth endures.

Of these four, the first three must be ultimately dismissed by all who are content to take their conception of Christianity's essentials from the New Testament. Concerning the fourth, however, we may truly say that the frequent mention of baptism and the unmistakable stress laid upon it by the apostles, show that they had heard and understood Christ's own words to this effect. And we may add that all the reasons which obtained for its observance then, are just as valid for to-day.

The second estimate above represents generally the attitude of that section of the universal Church which elects to be called by the name Baptist. There are confessedly wide divergences of opinion within its pale, but the point of unity is the special stress laid upon baptism as an indispensable condition of Church membership, and therefore only permissible to adults. A vast controversy, happily much less acrimonious now than in times past, may here be summarized in three points.

(i) The protest on behalf of baptism as a divinely-intended rite of entrance into the New Covenant of Christ's gospel, is well warranted by Scripture, and might well constitute a worthy mission for a distinct branch of the universal Church.

(ii) But the vehement opposition offered to infant baptism does injustice alike to the significance and the continuity of the Christian covenant. All the objections usually urged would be equally forceful against the

administration of the Old Covenant rite to children. But about this there is no dispute. The application of baptism to adults in the first Christian Churches was in very real sense an accident, arising out of the necessity of the case; though even then it was not confined to adults. The same kind of beginning had been inevitable when circumcision was ordained, and is still necessary on the foreign mission field. Nothing in Christ's whole personal attitude of teaching can be more clear than that His love and His kingdom embrace the little ones, quite as really as those of adult years. Our children need no sacraments to make them His; they belong to Him, and their baptism is truly at once the acknowledgement of His right and the assertion of their claim.

(iii) To insist, however, that whether children have been baptized or not, they must in later years be immersed, in order to become real Christians or have a right to Church membership, is contrary alike to the express statements of the apostles,[1] and to the whole spirit of the New Covenant.

The third estimate above is that of the Romish, Greek, and High Anglican churches. It is confessedly a corollary to the notion of Christian priesthood. But as the latter has no New Testament warrant, the former falls to the ground with it. In addition to which, the protest is inevitable that it would involve a moral impossibility. No mere performance of a rite, with or without sincere intention, can make any man the unconditional channel of divine grace for a moral being. No outer act of religion whatever, either on the part of

[1] See 1 Cor. i. 17; also v. 6, vi. 16; &c.

parents or clergy, can give a new moral nature to a babe. If further contradiction of baptismal regeneration were necessary, it is supplied by facts. These are too patent to need particular statement. The history of nations where the Church has been sacramentally supreme, no less than the observation of baptized children in after life, is more than sufficient.

Putting aside, then, these extreme and unwarranted representations, what is to be truthfully said in modern light concerning baptism—or, as it is sometimes termed, paedo-baptism—as the initiatory sign and seal of a New Covenant of love divine, pledged to us in Jesus Christ? In brief, at least the following.

(i) In some sincere and practical way the plain word of Christ and doctrine of the apostles must be heeded by all who claim to be Christian. To dismiss this sacrament entirely from consideration is virtually to disown the mastership of Christ.

(ii) He Himself plainly declared that He 'came not to destroy' the Old Covenant, but to complete it. In every deep and tender sense, baptism is the answering analogue to circumcision. The relation of children to it, therefore, is as natural as to the older rite, only it is as much more tender, spiritual, significant, and comprehensive, as the love of God in Jesus is a fuller revelation of the divine nature and purpose than the old Mosaic, priestly, prophetic legislation.

(iii) When, therefore, an infant is brought to the baptismal service, it is a grateful acknowledgement on the part of Christian parents of the divine mystery of good in the bestowal of a new life, to be, as such, loved

and cherished. Whence, also, it becomes a glad confession on their part that all they have, as well as all they are, belongs to Him who gave Himself for their redemption. Children, as God's highest and best gift, are especially and sacredly His.

(iv) It is also a sign of the corresponding claim by the parents, on behalf of their children, that these have a real right and special place in the kingdom of which Christ is King. This is undoubtedly the main meaning of the apostle Paul in telling the Corinthians that their children were 'holy.' [1]

(v) It is furthermore a pledge that the parents not only claim for their children a name and a place in the kingdom of Christ, but that they will be and do all that is possible on their part, to lead their child, as a free moral being, into the understanding of his position, and the personal ratification of his right afterwards in all reality.

All these considerations point to the necessity of distinguishing between Christian faith and mischievous superstition. The latter, alas! is by no means confined to the Romish or Anglican attitude. Quite apart from the wicked absurdity of the suggestion that unless babes are baptized they will be lost hereafter, there are yet floating about in the name of religion, and with marvellous persistence in the Free Churches, such senseless customs as the refusal to go

[1] 'For in such cases the unbelieving husband has become, and is holy, through union with a Christian woman, and the unbelieving wife is holy through union with a Christian brother. Otherwise your children would be unholy, but in reality they have a place among God's people' (1 Cor. vii. 14, Weymouth).

out of the house, or see a friend, or do any business, until the child has been baptized; so that the ceremony must be gone through as soon as possible after birth. Even then, it is thought quite sufficient, in many cases, to send the mother to some church, whilst the father takes no heed.

It is to be understood that for converts on the mission field who have previously been heathens, as also for those adults who, even in Christian England, have been so far heathen as never to have been dedicated to Christ in infant baptism, the case is different. Here there is definite need, whenever opportunity offers, that the real meaning of the Christian covenant should be made clear, and with intelligent sincerity accepted. But so far as the baptism of the children of avowedly Christian parents is concerned, one great essential of living Christianity is to make it unmistakable that this sacrament is emphatically a service for the parents, not for the child as such. It is for them to say, solemnly and deliberately, two things. (i) Whether they are Christian or not; Christian enough to own gratefully a precious gift of God; and to claim for their child a real spiritual standing in the same Kingdom of Heaven to which they themselves belong, as the highest privilege of their being. (ii) Whether then they also mean their child to become in actuality what he is already in potentiality—a real child of God; and consequently pledge themselves to do all in their power to lead him to become what he ought to be. The result of such a profession and dedication, publicly ratified with reverent emphasis, could not but tend to Christian reality.

The only additional note called for is that the practice of the Anglican Church here, in urging the necessity of Confirmation, must be owned to be much more really consistent with the Christian doctrine than the carelessness with which baptized children in the Free Churches are often overlooked. Whilst it is impossible that the rite itself should work any change in the unconscious infant, much may be wrought in the mind and heart of the parents. But when children have come to years of understanding, it is plain that there ought to be some solemn and definite opportunity, by whatever name it be called, for impressing upon them what they are by spiritual right, and leading them to ratify that right by the personal decision which now no other on earth can make for them. Thus the validity of the true Christian sacrament of baptism depends upon two genuine acts of consecration. First, that of the parents, when the child does not know its inheritance; then, in after years, when he does know, the deep glad solemn endorsement of his right by his own public avowal before God and man.

IV. The Lord's Supper

We come now to consider that which is so often called 'The Sacrament,' by way of pre-eminence. Such special emphasis is naturally accounted for, although any supremacy of this service to the neglect or contempt of the other, is not warranted in Christian reason.

It is inexpressibly sad that a tender and solemn command, emanating from Christ Himself, with a view

to love and unity, should have become the veritable symbol of the disunion of Christendom. One may in all charity suggest that there is on both sides of the great controversy which here obtains, the desire for truth, and the equal purpose to do what is done in remembrance of Him who died and rose again. But beyond this there appears no prospect in this world of any Christian agreement. However gently it be said, there is here an impassable gulf between some believers and others. The conception of Christianity which builds up an ecclesiastical structure on the basis of priesthood, and regards the Lord's Supper as a mysterious sacrifice requiring the ministration of a priest to make it valid, and culminating in the adoration of a 'Host' on the part of ordinary worshippers, can never coalesce with the simple spirituality and the Christian naturalness which dismisses the sacerdotal as untrue, and finds in this sacrament only scope for loving memory, spiritual communion, and renewed consecration.

The voluminous controversy in print hereupon, must be left to care for itself. Enough to take, as our tests of truth, reason and the Christian Scriptures. The former is our guide, the latter our authority. Ecclesiastical authority apart from these is irrelevant. On such grounds, some representations of this sacrament must be definitely disowned, whilst others must be pressed home upon the Christian conscience.

1. The following must be definitely put away, as having no part in Christianity's essentials, however tenaciously held by some sincere believers.

(i) All attempts to bring in a bodily or substantial presence of the living Christ, however metaphysically conceived or expressed, in the elements of bread and wine. It is quite unnecessary to reconsider the oft misquoted phrase, 'This is My body.' Concerning all His symbolic teaching Jesus plainly said, 'The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and life.' Any doctrine which not only contradicts Him, but would by crass literalism reduce the whole New Testament to nonsense, is unworthy of further notice.

(ii) All suggestions which would invest this natural and tenderly simple service with thaumaturgic efficacy or significance. The name 'Eucharist' may in itself be innocent enough, as a thankful commemoration of 'the Lord's act of giving thanks.' But like the other term 'Mass,' it has become so saturated with unwarranted associations, as to involve almost inevitable connection with priestly functions of which the New Testament knows nothing.

(iii) Certainly there is no room for any assumption of priestly power or duty on the part of some 'celebrant.' For which reason it would greatly conduce to Christian reality, if all such terms were dissociated from this service altogether. Not only, however, do Anglican Churches announce the 'celebration of the Eucharist,' but even the Free Churches also talk of the sacrament being 'administered,' on such and such an occasion. Whereas in the New Testament there is no trace of either administrant or administration.

(iv) All references to this sacrament which would surround it with mystic terror or superstitious awe,

must be regarded as foreign alike to Christ's intention and to its possible influence for Christian good. Here the Prayer-book says truthfully and tenderly, 'Take this holy sacrament to your comfort.' But many who are under no priestly delusion both suffer themselves and cause suffering to others from want of understanding.[1] The condition of things which called forth the apostle's protest to the Corinthians, was such as happily is now inconceivable. It would be only a cruel anachronism to apply it to any sincere and sensitive soul to-day.

2. On the other hand, the positive reasons for regarding this sacrament as definitely included amongst the essentials of Christianity, may be thus summarized.

(i) In regard to the Lord's Supper it is impossible to ignore its analogical connexion with the ancient Jewish Passover. Jesus Himself acknowledged the relationship, and the apostles echoed it. But in each case it was an *a fortiori* reference. 'How much more,' says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' Such is the manifest and inevitable inference. The memorial service becomes a sacrament, in that it surpasses the Passover by all the difference between Christ and the Paschal Lamb, between His whole

[1] Especially from the reading in the Old Version of 1 Cor. xi. 29. How educated men can continue to do this sincerely, in face of modern knowledge, passes comprehension.

doctrine and Old Testament teaching. Hence its manifold spiritual and Christian significance.

(ii) It also indicates clearly the end of the Old Covenant, and the setting free of all men from the rites and ceremonies of Judaism. It is a glad reminder that the new and living way is now opened, whereby 'whosoever will' may come to God through Him in whom all the types and shadows of the law are for ever fulfilled. The Jewish theocracy is thereby disestablished, and the Kingdom of Heaven set up on earth instead.

(iii) This service is, therefore, the distinctive emblem of full-orbed Christian life. Baptism is connected with birth, but this sacrament represents such growth into reality as constitutes genuine discipleship. It is for this reason a most misleading anachronism, as hinted above, to commence such a service, after the fashion of the Prayer-book, with the Ten Commandments and the inseparable associations of the Old Covenant. They are here left as far behind as the ripe scholar leaves his alphabet. The very first recorded teachings of Jesus, as already shown, make this for ever clear. To associate this service with such a Jewish standard of character and conduct is to defeat its very purpose. The unmistakable aim of its ordination is to lead the human heart far beyond those ancient negatives into the full, positive, spiritual fulfilment of the two great commands which Jesus Himself reformulated and emphasized. If 'the sacrament of the Lord's Supper' does not do this, it is self-condemned as a failure.

(iv) As the means whereby such spiritual character is to be brought about, this service aims at binding

each disciple directly and personally to his Lord, by the avowal of a heartfelt claim to share in all the significance of His death and resurrection. This will never be better expressed than by Paul when he wrote to the Romans : ' That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection.' [1]

(v) Out of such an experience, so distinctively expressed, necessarily issues the deepest obligation to personal and practical obedience. The sacramental service itself is obedience to what Christ enjoined. It is a strange ideal which says that what is wanted in Christianity is obedience to Christ's commands, and then proceeds to set aside as trifling His tenderest and most direct injunction of all—' Do this in remembrance of Me.' The very doing of this becomes the most express and open pledge that a disciple can give, of his intention to live the Christian life with all its relations and responsibilities.

(vi) In full accord with the Master's intention is also another feature of this service—viz. the pledge of Christian brotherhood which it involves. It is often and rightly termed the ' Communion Service,' for this

[1] Rom. vi. 4, 5. It is especially to be noted that here as elsewhere the apostle does not employ the language so often repeated in the Prayer-book—' Grant us so to *eat the flesh* of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ and to *drink His blood*, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood.' Such phraseology, however susceptible of spiritual interpretation, is in these days much more calculated to drive away from the Lord's Supper than to draw to it just those who most need its comfort and stimulus.

reason. Certainly all claim to spiritual efficacy, however transcendental, which may be attached to the idea of a sacrament, would be null and void unless it did tend to develop a brotherhood worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the light of such a memorial service, both of the two great commands become radiant with significance.

(vii) In our own day, moreover, as never before, there is intensified need to insist upon all that larger scope which Jesus Himself gave to the second great command. He has for ever answered the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' in a vivid word which makes us see, as by a lightning flash amidst surrounding darkness, what is the real nature and extent of His Kingdom on earth. If, as the whole New Testament maintains, His death is inseparable from His resurrection, and both together point to the establishment of the Kingdom which is 'not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy through the Holy Spirit,' then here is the very occasion for the mightiest possible inspiration in that direction. Such a kingdom can never be developed for human society, any more than for an individual, from without. It must issue from a centre of enthusiasm. And where on earth can there be a centre of incandescent enthusiasm—as Professor Seeley pointed out in his classical chapters forty years ago—like the service of love which sets itself especially to do full and tender justice to the cross of Jesus Christ? Is not this description as true as thrilling?—'Witnessing His sufferings and convinced by the miracles they saw Him work that

they were voluntarily endured, men's hearts were touched, and pity for weakness, blending strangely with wondering admiration for unlimited power, an agitation of gratitude, sympathy, and astonishment, such as nothing else could ever excite, sprang up in them, and when, turning from His deeds to His words, they found this very self-denial which had guided His own life, prescribed as the principle which should guide theirs, gratitude broke forth in joyful obedience, self-denial produced self-denial, and the Law and Law-giver together were enshrined in their inmost hearts for inseparable veneration.'[1] Of a truth, if any such appreciation of Christ's cross constitutes the essence of the Christian service we are here considering, not only is it in very deed a sacrament, but it is the sacrament of which modern society has more need than any other. For if only such self-denial, such joyful obedience, such love of all men for His sake, did permeate civilization, the 'social problem' would be solved, and human sins and sorrows would be reduced to their uttermost minimum. The sacrament which makes the disciple one with Christ, makes him also one with all those for whom Christ died. And that is the only regenerating principle which is at once pure enough, strong enough, comprehensive enough, to afford human society any hope of a millennium of justice, peace, and gladness.

Here, then, we leave the case for the recognition of these sacraments as belonging to Christianity's essentials. All life must involve both birth and growth, and

[1] *Ecce Homo.* See especially the chapters upon 'Christ's Credentials' and 'The Enthusiasm of Humanity,' Eversley ed., p. 58.

the higher life which we call eternal[1] and spiritual is no exception. Baptism is the pledge of a real beginning. No sacerdotalism, nor any kind of thaumaturgy, is requisite to constitute such reality. All that is needed is sincerity allied with truth, in face of such an inheritance of comfort, privilege, opportunity and responsibility, as the Christian covenant offers. The Lord's Supper stands for the persistence of holy principle and the tenacity of loving gratitude. It thus means the ceaseless renewal of all that is purest, tenderest, deepest, strongest, towards growth in grace and Christian goodness.

Both sacraments may be ignored by careless religious convention, marred by superstition, travestied by misrepresentation. But they remain, for all whose minds are open and whose hearts are pure, precious channels whereby the realities of the truth and love of God may come into a human soul, and thence also flow forth again to purify and help and heal all who are equally human and needy.

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[1] 'This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent' (John xvii. 2).

IX

THE CHRISTIAN HEREAFTER

'The only doctrine of retribution that can permanently hold the conscience of mankind, is doctrine that represents retribution as natural and therefore inevitable; as right, and therefore certain. The tendency to make this life less serious is to be counteracted not so much by insisting upon future unchangeableness, as by proclaiming the serious and exacting nature of human existence, the urgency of duty, the certainty of righteous retribution, the holiness and love of God, and the spiritual quality of salvation as consisting in becoming good like Him. In this direction is a change that our time has witnessed in the character of the doctrine of future punishment. Once it was commonly held that endless punishment was simply the just punishment of the sins of the present life. Of late it has come to be more commonly held that the continued punishment of the future is the necessary accompaniment of the continued sin of the future; that punishment continues because sin continues and must last while it lasts. This change is for the better, because it grounds the future retributions in a genuine moral necessity.'

Dr. W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 476.

'Never should we admit that any human being can be saved by omnipotence. Never, never should we admit that any human being will be saved by pure divine favouritism worked out in a providential plan. I say it carefully, but I say it with every atom of manhood I have, that if one moral person can, anywhere, by any process whatever, be coerced into righteousness, then all our sense of God-given equity demands that all men shall be saved. Could I be a Necessitarian for one swift instant, I would have to be a Universalist for ever.'

Prof. O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 403.

IX

THE CHRISTIAN HEREAFTER

'For we must all of us appear before Christ's judgement-seat in our true characters, in order that each may then receive an award for his actions in this life, in accordance with what he has done, whether it be good or worthless.'

'Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.'

2 Cor. v. 10; Gal. vi. 7 (Weymouth).

Whatever the theory of evolution may suggest in regard to human ancestry, there are differences so vast between men and animals at the present stage of their development as to be simply immeasurable. The analogy between man and dog, so far as relates to the vertebrate structure of a physical organism, may be complete. But it ends there. Professor Haeckel's suggestion that there is no essential superiority in the human over the canine mind,[1] may be dismissed as more than sufficiently disproved by the very method he recommends, viz. that one should keep and watch 'a fine dog, for a year.' Amongst other distinctions, the most sagacious animal has no conception of the future, let alone any capacity for concern about it. The instinct which leads the dog to bury his bone for another meal, or the bird to build a nest for eggs to come, involves no such conception. The difference here between man and beast is that the latter cannot touch

[1] See *Haeckel's Monism False*, by the present writer, p. 361.

the future, and the former cannot let it alone. Not only does the eye of the human soul scan the prospect of all this life's contingencies, but it continually looks far on into the gloom beyond the grave. It is just as useless for Naturalism to preach 'thanatism,' as for common sense to protest against the 'otherworldliness' of religion. Nothing has yet made, or will make, humanity content to live and die, as do other animals, regardless of any future. Poetic words merit quotation just because they voice the most undeniable and indestructible realities of human judgement as well as emotion.

> My own dim life shall teach me this—
> That life shall live for evermore;
> Else earth is darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is.

Confessedly an immeasurable part of the influence of religion has always been derived from appeal to the future. No religion that has ever merited the name, has confined its sanctions or promises to this life. Nor is there any risk whatever in predicting that, so long as men are men, the notion of simply going on from day to day, content with duty and philanthropy, will never constitute the religion of humanity. Even if the day should speedily come when a genuine Christianity should have brought to pass the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, there would yet be death to reckon with. But as things are, the unmeasured wrongs and inexplicable mysteries which darken the present, demand, if God be God, some future settlement. In addition to which the untold anguish of separation from loved ones, together with the utter

shrinking of all healthy personality from the bare thought of extinction, join with the growing conviction that consciousness as expressed in moral character is unaffected by death, to confirm for modern days all the ancient yearning for and unquenchable expectation of another life beyond the grave.

The strength of this human instinct is exhibited vividly enough in the study of comparative religion. The strange but significant Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, the transmigrations of Brahmanism, the Nirvana of Buddhism, the sensuous Paradise of Islam, all bear witness to the truth that—

> Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Has ever truly longed for death
>
> 'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
> Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want.

Certainly Judaism, from which Christianity is developed, was no exception to this religious rule. It has been well said that 'the opinion that the doctrine of immortality is not found in the Old Testament, is a very strange one.'[1] Although the thought of a future life is not found in the form which it takes amongst us, 'the gloomy shadows of Sheol' were yet real enough to testify that death did not end all. But the influence of Christianity in confirming, purifying, enlarging this conviction, was equally needed and manifest. Its scope can scarcely be better expressed than in the familiar quotations that Jesus 'has put an end to death, and has brought life and immortality

[1] *Manual of Theology*, Dr. Banks, p. 286.

to light through the gospel,'[1] and 'that He might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'[2]

That such an outlook upon the future beyond the grave is essential to Christianity, there can be no manner of doubt. The questions which here inevitably arise all concern the contents of this outlook. These queries, one must confess, have been so many and so vexed, whilst the answers to them have been so confident and so contradictory, that modern Christianity, at least, must insist upon more humility and caution. No wiser modern words have been uttered in this regard than those of Dr. W. N. Clarke. Although the whole section on this theme in his valuable work should be consulted, we may especially echo the following paragraph.

'In this vast and fascinating field of thought, it is difficult to be faithful to our own ignorance. So deeply interesting are the themes of study here that we are strongly tempted to assume that we know much more about them than we really do. Positive teaching about a great variety of matters in the unseen world has long been common, and Christian people generally suppose that they know many things concerning which real knowledge is not attainable. In this region it is important to remember that we are dealing with subjects that lie wholly beyond our experience, and to feel neither shame nor disappointment in confessing our ignorance. If we are to observe the actual limits of our knowledge, many matters on which definite statements are constantly made must

[1] 2 Tim. i. 10. Weymouth. [2] Heb. ii. 15.

be left in some indistinctness. Nevertheless, the Christian revelation shows us some clear and solid realities, and our own moral nature, taught by Christ, makes some inextinguishable assertions; so that we are not wholly in the dark.' [1]

The 'solid realities' here suggested must be looked for under five heads: immortality, resurrection, judgement, heaven, hell. These theological terms cover all the possibilities of human destiny, in that great unknown hereafter to which all the deepest and highest instincts of mankind unhesitatingly point. Ecclesiastical Christianity has certainly had much to say concerning all of these. On the whole its deliverances have been sincere; but that does not render them infallible. Far too much has been assumed; and a great deal has been asserted, which more careful consideration, in modern light, shows cannot be maintained. No sharp-cut definitions, no dogmas driven home with anathemas, no recklessly sweeping assertions, from any standpoint, have availed or will avail, to settle for ever the great problems and mysteries here involved. Each Church, each man, must be content to learn, to teach, to do, that which is apparently true, and leave the rest to a 'faithful Creator.' Well indeed, in face of all the difficulties which surround this theme, does the modern theologian say, 'What is our safeguard? To hold and preach the gospel of the day of salvation and to leave the dead without theorizing about them or the mysteries of their destiny, to their Lord and ours.' [2]

Indefiniteness is, however, quite distinct from un-

[1] *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 449.
[2] *A Higher Catechism of Theology*, Dr. W. B. Pope, p. 366.

certainty. Whilst Christianity leaves many questions unanswered, it makes certain features of the hereafter sure enough to constitute a real gospel, whilst emphasizing the present as a time of moral probation. Its general message hereupon, the true substance of what is termed 'eschatology,' may be tentatively put into a sentence. Death is not the end of all; there is real personal continuity; this is to be maintained in connexion with a new and spiritual body, and, starting from the moral character here made, is to enter upon a further and limitless stage of spiritual evolution. This is confessedly to say much in little. But when justice is done to all that is involved, here is more than enough both to justify Christianity and satisfy humanity.

It is when details come to be considered, that difficulties spring up. These are inevitable in the fierce light of modern knowledge. But their consideration does not demand, we venture to say, what some very new theologians so confidently assert, viz. that all 'venerable beliefs' shall be relegated to museum shelves, whilst this generation starts an entirely fresh system of its own. There is certainly nothing to prevent any eager thinkers from formulating a theology altogether new. But there is a great deal to prevent their calling it Christian theology, when the very essence of the Christian gospel is sometimes ostentatiously cast out of it.

When, for instance, we are told definitely that 'The Church has *nothing whatever* to do with preparing men for a world to come. The best way to prepare a man for the world beyond is to get him

to live well and truly in this one,'[1] we are almost relieved of any need for reply by the manifest self-contradiction. Christian holiness, as outlined above, is undoubtedly good for this world, and for all humanity, here and now. But, assuredly, if Christ be worthy of any deference at all, that is not the whole case. Part at least, nay great part, of the worth of holiness, as the fullest embodiment of what it is to live well and truly on Christian lines, is definitely to prepare men for a world to come. To ignore this, is no more common sense than it is Christianity. One might as well seek to impress it deeply on the mind of a boy at school, that he was there not in the least to fit himself for after life, but only to learn his lessons and eat his food.

What if Christian theologians have been, in days gone by, so eager and confident, or so deeply impressed by the solemnity of the hereafter, as to drift sometimes into childish 'otherworldliness'? It is better after all to be childish than brutish. We can surely correct their errors without professing to care no more than a dog, or know no more than a cat, what becomes of a moral human being when death has done its worst. The evolution of Christianity means progress through

[1] *The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 250. And it is equally reckless misrepresentation, for which the broadest charity finds it difficult to forgive an educated man, writing as a Christian, when we read that 'No greater mistake could be made than to estimate the Church of Jesus by ecclesiastical squabbles and divisions, or even by psalm-singing and go-to-meeting talk.' Has any Christian or unchristian man, worthy of regard, ever anywhere suggested that these things should be taken as the estimate of the Church's worth on earth? With all respect one cannot but reply that the 'greater mistake' hinted at is found on the part of the writer who makes such an insinuation.

the right valuation and maintenance of what has been true in the past, quite as really as by acknowledging and welcoming what was then unknown but is known now. Essential Christian faith is thus, in regard to its doctrine of the hereafter, quite prepared to meet alike the relics of exploded Materialism, the claims of Naturalism, the cynicisms of Secularism, the assertions of Spiritism, and the confidence of the newest theology, with equanimity. On what grounds, we will here endeavour succinctly to set forth.

(1) As to Immortality

Genuine Christianity speaks with clear assurance equally concerning the nature of the life beyond the grave, and the reasons for relying on it. It does not bid us long to 'join the choir invisible' in which personality is lost for ever as the drop is absorbed in the ocean. That were a mere semblance of life, as meaningless on the other side of the grave as it would be on this. Christian belief asserts personal continuity; which means that the self after death is as real, that is as conscious of itself, as before. In face of all the unfathomable though actual, marvels of our present consciousness, it does not regard such continuity of the individual self as making any great tax upon human credulity. Still, the reasons are ready which redeem the conviction that death is but a tunnel, not a terminus, from being estimated as merely pious imagination or feeble-minded desire.

(i) 'We believe in immortality because we believe in God.' Assuming that the term God signifies not

merely a 'Higher Power' or a 'supreme Force immanent in nature,' but the infinite moral Personality whom Jesus teaches us to call our Heavenly Father, it is impossible that He should be such and yet be either content Himself, or have us content, with such a conflict of moral contradictions as this present world exhibits. All that is best and all that is worst in humanity alike point to some further sphere of action, in which the good may be developed, and the bad permanently distinguished from it.

(ii) The teaching of Christ as to the reality of such a future is so unmistakable, that to deny it is inevitably to reject Him altogether. If He be true, the life to come is as sure as the life that is.

(iii) But besides His doctrine and its enforcement by His character, there is also pledge in fact that that doctrine is true. The Christianity of the New Testament is, as we have seen, absolutely committed to the reality of His Resurrection and Ascension. Here the question as to the 'physical' nature of His Resurrection is irrelevant. Its actuality is beyond controversy. The reality of the personal life which did unquestionably manifest itself after actual death had taken place, becomes the guarantee that the same will happen to all those for whose sakes He died. Only the absolute disproof of the Resurrection could, therefore, affect this certainty.

(iv) Modern knowledge, though insufficient of itself to give us proof, yet tends much rather to confirm what Christian faith suggests, than to deny it. Evolution, so far from dismissing 'as a deplorable anachronism' the thought of human immortality, becomes

its most effective endorsement.[1] 'In the course of evolution,' says Mr. John Fiske, 'there is no more philosophical difficulty in man's acquiring immortal life, than in his acquiring the erect posture and articulate speech.' [2]

(v) To which we may well add the conclusion of Dr. Momerie: 'The more thoroughly we comprehend the process of evolution the more fully convinced shall we be that it is throughout a rational process, and that, therefore, it cannot come to an irrational conclusion, cannot end in an anti-climax. The more thoroughly we comprehend the process of evolution, the more profoundly shall we feel that to deny the immortality of the soul, is to rob the whole process of its meaning. Man is a fruit which it needed all that went before to ripen. He is the last and greatest achievement of evolution. To suppose that what has been evolved at such a cost will suddenly collapse, is to suppose that the whole scheme of things is self-stultifying. It is to convert the whole drama of Creation into an imbecile and drivelling farce.' [3]

(vi) Nor is the witness of modern Spiritism to be as utterly flouted as some timid Christians and rigid

[1] The reasons for this statement are given in the present writer's volume on *Haeckel's Monism False*, ch. vi. See also *Life Everlasting*, by Mr. John Fiske, a pronounced evolutionist, and Dr. Momerie's booklet (now published at sixpence) on *Immortality*. These will suffice to show the emptiness of the Haeckelian boast that 'Modern psychology, physiology, ontogeny and phylogeny, rigorously refuse an inch of ground for athanatism.' It would be difficult to represent more falsely the trend of modern psychological research.

[2] *Life Everlasting*, p. 85.

[3] *Immortality*, Dr. Momerie, cheap ed., p. 39.

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theologians avow. Seeing that modern thought, under the guise of Naturalism and Agnosticism, opposes the Christian faith in immortality more keenly than in any preceding age, there is certainly no Christian reason why we should not avail ourselves of any facts that are true, and inferences that are fair, on behalf of that faith. Those who imagine that the whole case for Spiritism can be summed up in one word , fraud,' after Haeckel's self-sufficient fashion,[1] only show that they have never examined the facts.[2] Those who are at the pains to study carefully Mr. F. W. Myers' volumes on *Human Personality*—and they alone—will know what weight to attach to his final and deliberate pronouncement: 'As a matter of fact, our research has led us to results of a quite different type. They have not been negative only, but largely positive. We have shown that amid much deception and self-deception, fraud and illusion,

[1] Or Mr. Maskelyne's profitable expositions.

[2] Thus A. B. C. in the *Methodist Times*: 'It appears to me childish that grown men should seek to confirm the faith of Jesus by the testimony of mesmerism and crystal gazing. That is what it amounts to.' But, with all respect, this illustrates the above. No one who has investigated fairly could say such a thing. For 'That' is precisely what it does not amount to, as any one may see who will only study such small summaries as Mr. E. Bennett's *Spiritualism*, in Jack's 'Scientific Series,' and *Twenty Years of Psychical Research*. Have we not apostolic warrant (Phil. iv. 8) for giving all heed to 'whatsoever things are true'? When such hopeless materialistic Monism as Prof. Haeckel's is thrust by a cheap press into the lap of every man of to-day, the wisdom of the serpent to which Christ Himself urges us would certainly suggest that if there are facts—as assuredly there are—which give the lie direct to the advocacy of 'thanatism,' then, in their place, they should be noted and appreciated.

veritable manifestations do reach us from beyond the grave. The central claim of Christianity is thus confirmed as never before.'[1] The unquestionable thoroughness of the scientific method of the research referred to, joins with the clear indifference of the writer to conventional theology, to demand for such a judgement much more respectful heed than it has thus far received, either from believers or unbelievers. There is no valid reason whatever, religious or irreligious, why such research to-day should not yield a confirmation as sober as desirable to the thesis of Christian theology expressed by Dr. W. N. Clarke: 'The best human thought, springing from the best experience, recognizes more and more the intrinsic value of man, and tends constantly to the assertion of immortality as a universal human endowment.'[2] Death, in a word, is, from the Christian standpoint, 'neither end nor beginning, but an event in a career, an experience of life.'

(2) As to Resurrection

The consideration of what is essential to Christianity does not demand a formulated decision concerning the 'second coming' of Christ.[3] Many and varied

[1] *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, vol. ii., p. 288.

[2] *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 452.

[3] 'The second coming of Christ can scarcely be reckoned among the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel' (*Manual of Theology*, Dr. Beet, p. 463). 'That the doctrine we have traced to Christ pertains to the future demands, in our interpretation of it, utmost caution. Doubtless the fulfilment of these New Testament prophecies will differ as greatly from their letter as did that of the Old Testament prophecies from the expectation of Israel' (p. 485).

are the opinions held by sincere believers concerning the interpretation of the teaching of Christ and His apostles hereupon. The sincerity and intelligence of those who thus differ, suggest real difficulties, which should be treated with corresponding patience and charity. Dr. James Stuart Russell's work on the 'Parousia,' intended to show that Christ's second coming actually took place at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, is written with conspicuous ability, and endorsed by Christian thinkers of high character and position.[1] Others think of that coming as still in the future. Some believe it to be the near future. The real question for each believer to consider is, whether the 'coming' which is so emphatically and yet so ambiguously insisted on in the New Testament, is kataclysmic or gradual, a process now continually going on, or an event of overwhelming suddenness. Practically and spiritually, the decision is irrelevant. The genuine disciple will think and feel, will pray and work, exactly the same, whether he expects, as Paul eventually did, that death will be the resurrection that brings him to his Lord, or whether he thinks, as some sincere Christians have done in every age, that a tremendous kataclysm may be expected at any hour, when Christ will visibly appear to all humanity.

[1] Thus Dr. J. Clifford says: 'For more than twenty years I have held that the prophecies of the New Testament concerning what is known as the Second Advent, were fulfilled, for the most part, in the years A.D. 68–70. I reached those conclusions after long and patient study of all the passages in the Scriptures bearing on the subject.' An excellent résumé of this view is given in Rev. E. Hampden Cook's volume, *The Christ has Come* (3rd ed., Simpkin).

Theologically, however, and intellectually, the question is important, as deciding partly the nature and altogether the time of the resurrection. As to the latter, if the coming of Christ is yet future, there must be some kind of waiting or 'intermediate state' for all the dead. But, as Dr. W. N. Clarke puts it, 'If no visible descent of Christ is looked for, no simultaneous resurrection of humanity on the earth will be expected. If we accept the view that Christ's coming is not an event but a process, we shall naturally think that each human being's resurrection takes place at his death, and consists in the rising of the man from death to life in another realm of being.' [1]—'According to this view, resurrection is not simultaneous for all, but continuous or successive; and for no human being is there any intervening period of disembodiment.'

Most Christian believers will, however, as yet, probably incline to the other view, viz. that 'The second coming of Christ will close the Intermediate State with the resurrection of the body, and will usher in the final judgement which will issue in eternal life and eternal punishment.' [2] To discuss fully all the alleged scriptural grounds of this view, is here no more necessary than possible. For our present purpose it will suffice to point out that 'the Intermediate State' is not a New Testament phrase, but a theological expression, devised in order to put emphasis upon

[1] *An Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 458. For the view as to the second coming, the whole of the section from pp. 436–448 should be studied.

[2] *The Intermediate State*, by Dr. G. S. Barrett. For a thoughtful statement of the generally received view, this volume is undoubtedly the best that can be recommended.

the condition of human spirits at its close. 'Probation after judgement is impossible, but probation before judgement is essential, and I am unable to see how this probation can be reached for the whole of mankind, save in the Intermediate State.' [1] The assumptions, however, beneath such a statement require no little reconsideration. These will appear as we proceed. Only two notes need now be made, viz. that 'before judgement,' on such a view, continued existence would have to be bodiless. But this is neither contemplated in the New Testament, nor supported by Christian philosophy. On the other hand, 'after judgement,' personal continuity not only assumes a real though spiritual body, but also and necessarily moral capacity. In which case no man, and no theology, is warranted in saying that probation is 'impossible.'

In a word, Christianity does not lay the stress of its warnings and promises upon the possession by each man of an immortal soul, but upon the deathlessness of his whole personality. And further, the resurrection which awaits him neither contemplates the resuscitation of his mortal body, nor a period of purely spiritual existence before his being 'clothed upon' with the spiritual body. The essential truth of the resurrection is in the case of every man as it was with Christ Himself, the transformation of the natural body into a spiritual body. Whether this transformation is to take place immediately after death, or only after an interval, is not a fundamental question, but may be left to each man's own conviction. Certainly the apostle Paul does not seem to have anticipated any

[1] *The Intermediate State*, Dr. G. S. Barrett, p. 95.

such interval when he wrote 'We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.'[1] Nor is there any one of the reasons usually suggested on behalf of the necessity of an intermediate state, which does not find equal application and emphasis when it is altogether omitted.

(3) As to Judgement

The matter beyond controversy here is the reality of judgement. This is unmistakably essential to Christianity. The time or sequence of the judgement is not. It is more than possible for two equally thoughtful and sincere believers to put a different sense upon the latter, whilst earnestly endorsing the former. Let us take as typical a well-known statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There the writer says: 'Inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, judgement; so Christ also having been once offered to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation.'[2] Here certainly the first clause appears to be decisive against any interval betwixt death and judgement. But it is by no means sure, as so many think, that the words 'appear a second time to them that wait for Him' must mean either an earthly or a heavenly kataclysm.[3]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1. [2] Heb. ix. 27, 28.

[3] Yet if Millenarians speak strongly, they can scarcely exceed some writers on the latest theology. 'Perhaps it would help to clear up the subject before going any farther, if I were to say frankly that there is no such thing as punishment, no far-off Judgement Day,

Some, indeed, may think that the writer had this view before him, and may recoil from deeming him mistaken. But others may equally shrink from putting upon such words a construction which makes his doctrine, in modern light, alike unnecessary and incredible.

When, again, the apostle Paul solemnly affirms that 'we must all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ' —is a far-off, kataclysmic, universally simultaneous assize the only true or possible interpretation? With all gentleness, but no less perspicuity, we must say that it is not. As it would verge upon mockery to insist upon either the erect or the sitting position as an essential part of the real judgement, so is it quite unjustifiable to put all emphasis upon an assumed far-distant simultaneousness.

Nor does 'the judgement-seat of Christ' warrant any thought of Christ as a personally angry Judge, inflicting arbitrary or vengeful sentences, from without, on human souls.[1]

We are before the judgement-seat of Christ now, and are every day preparing our own destiny. The very

no great white throne, and no judge external to ourselves' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 213). Unfortunately this style of writing on such a theme does *not* clear up matters, but only stirs them up into irritation and sometimes justifies indignation. Many other illustrations of this might be culled from the chapter on 'Salvation, Judgement, and the Life to Come,' from which these words are taken. There is no little truth in the lessons enforced, but a manner of expression which is often simply truculent, is not calculated to help and guide, but rather to enkindle angry strife.

[1] Here the writer just quoted says truthfully, 'We are accustomed to think of punishment as a sentence imposed by some authority from without, and containing within itself some element of vengeance for wrongdoing. But in the divine dealings with men, such punishment has never existed, and never will' (*The New Theology*, p. 213).

essence of Christianity is the reminder that day by day He is our Judge, whose tenderness towards sinners must never be permitted to hide His severity against sin.

Yet even the remembrance of these, His never-separated tenderness and severity,[1] does but serve to throw up into vivid relief three great negatives.

(i) There is nothing capricious or arbitrary in the judgement of God, either now or hereafter. Doom is not created, but only recognized, by God. The essence of judgement is the recognition and confirmation of character. The divine tenderness, or severity, does not cause human character, but is evoked by it. Hence all condemnation is self-condemnation, and all punishment is self-punishment, ever associated with the consequent sorrow of the Judge who would save if He could.[2]

(ii) There is no necessity whatever for any transcendental or panoramic vindication of the divine character as regards His dealings with men, because every individual soul will bear in himself the unimpeachable witness of the righteousness of God, in that he will simply reap what he has sown, whether it be good or

[1] See Rom. xi. 22.

[2] Here, anticipating and expressing with more refined lucidity much latest theology, Dr. W. N. Clarke well says: 'The only judgement that the Scriptures foretell is a judgement according to works; and by a judgement according to works is meant a decision founded upon an estimate of character as illustrated and proved by conduct. When it is said that men are to be judged by Christ, more is meant than that Christ will personally preside in judgement and announce their destiny. It is meant that Christ is the standard by comparison with which character is to be estimated, and destiny to proceed' (*Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 460, 661).

ill. No celestial dramatism could add to that, any more than the quietude of a ceaselessly proceeding judgement can in the least diminish its solemn certainty.

(iii) No neutral pause immediately after death is really thinkable on Christian lines. It is only reverent truth to say that 'When a life is ended, God must estimate the man according to it, and assign him his proper place in the life beyond.' [1] Death can do nothing to character. As to what may take place during the act of dying we know nothing, and therefore can say nothing. What we do know is that death is a physical event, and neither makes nor unmakes moral character. As a man is when he passes from this side of the grave, so will he find himself on the other side. In reality, therefore, he is already judged on his entry into the other life, and according to that judgement he must, at least at the outset, be placed, in view of whatever may be before him. This is not only all we need to know concerning judgement hereafter, but it is what most of all needs to be, and can be, brought home to every moral being. It may be less dramatic than popular theology, but it is certainly more real and therefore more influential, as the world leaves intellectual childishness behind.

(4) As to Heaven

In no subject whatever is there more need to-day to echo the avowal of the apostle Paul—'When I

[1] *Outline of Theology* Dr. W. N. Clarke, p. 460.

became a man I put away childish things '—than in regard to the Christian promise of blessed immortality. It is confessedly natural that on such a theme there should be strong feeling. Any valid prospect of comfort and hope beyond the tragedy of death's resistless separation must occasion deep emotion. And when assurance as bright as firm comes from the One whom Christian believers cannot doubt—' If it were not so, I would have told you '—it is no wonder that hymns for public worship, as well as poems adapted to sacred solitude, have sought to express such hope in glowing terms. None the less is it true that by means of both these channels much that is alike unworthy and unwarranted has been disseminated throughout Christendom. There is scarcely a hymn-book, even in modern Christian use, which does not need serious pruning and purging on this theme. Analogy and imagery have always their limits, and especially in relation to a subject which is by its very nature so largely hidden from all inquisitive gaze, however sincere this may be. Simply to put into rhyme the vividly figurative language of the last portion of the New Testament, as concrete representations of the bliss or woe of the great hereafter, is to create repulsion in the minds of the very men of to-day who most need genuine comfort and hope. The practice, now happily somewhat decreasing, of also filling children's minds with high-flown descriptions of a ' better land ' after death, is not only unnatural and misleading, but accumulates for them a dangerous amount to be afterwards unlearned.

When the utmost heed that mind and heart can

prompt is given to the sayings of Christ in the Gospels and the expectations voiced by the apostles in their letters, the sum-total of our knowledge is very little. Especially when it is found, after open-minded scrutiny, that no other professed revelation of the unseen yields any fuller information worth regarding. Unfortunately even that which the Christian believer may regard as valid has been trebly obscured.

(i) The most significant term in the New Testament, occurring but twice, and that on Christ's own lips,[1] is now so unworthily represented in modern English, and is yet so thoughtlessly reiterated by religious convention, as to become a positive hindrance rather than help towards any such Christian inspiration concerning the future as the thoughtful can accept. To represent Christ as saying 'In My Father's house are many mansions,' is to-day not merely self-contradictory, seeing that in our modern speech a 'mansion' is always larger than a 'house,' but utterly mischievous. Every one knows that at their worst mansions are associated with all that is un-Christlike; whilst even at their best they certainly do not suggest the two elements of the meaning of the word which He employed.[2] Real rest and further progress lie at the

[1] John xiv. 2, 23.

[2] Liddell and Scott render the word μονή, a 'station,' 'a stopping-place'; and the comment hereupon of Bishop Westcott, whose competence none will question, is: 'The rendering comes from the Vulgate *mansiones*, which were resting-places, and especially the stations on a great road where travellers found refreshment. This appears to be the true meaning of the Greek word here; so that the contrasted notions of repose and progress are combined in this vision of the future. The word occurs in the New Testament only here and in v. 23.'

heart of Christ's own word. And when further the 'Father's house' is understood to mean what alone to-day it can mean, viz. the universe, there emerges the conception of a heaven to which the strongest mind, equally with the purest heart, may leap up in hope. This, however, never is nor can be conveyed by the repetition of the archaism originally borrowed from the Vulgate, which so strangely and thoughtlessly yet contents the average believer.[1]

(ii) The notion of a terminal kataclysm, after a period of either unconsciousness or stagnation, followed by a plunge into rapturous and perfect bliss,[2] has completely blurred out the nobler and more natural thought of true peace conjoined with development in all that constitutes Christworthiness. But if these are understood to start forthwith on the other side the grave, from the attainment of character reached here when death's summons comes, what need, what room is there either for the 'Purgatory' of Rome, or the 'Intermediate State' of popular theology?

[1] Even so able a writer as Canon Maccoll, in his very thoughtful book *Life Here and Hereafter*, whilst giving four discourses on this text, never mentions the meaning of the word, but is sweetly content with the old empty reiteration.

[2] Thus Dr. Faber's otherwise tender and beautiful hymn, 'My God, how wonderful Thou art,' ends with this impossible pietism:

> Father of Jesus, love's reward,
> What rapture will it be
> Prostrate before Thy throne to lie,
> And ever gaze on Thee!

Do those who compile hymn-books imagine that any thoughtful man, woman, or child, will have their appreciation of or desire for heaven enhanced by such language as this?

(iii) The confusion which has occasioned so many eschatological logomachies, arises most of all from failing to do justice to the primal elements of the true Christian doctrine. Personal continuity is the foundation belief, too firm to admit of controversy. But the stress has fallen upon the continuity rather than, where it ought to rest, upon the personality. The important matter is not the fact but the content of the continuance. For on whichever side of the grave a personality is conceived it must, as such, connote moral capacity, with corresponding activity and responsibility. Less than this beyond the grave, would give to Christian faith not even so much significance as the old shadowy 'Sheol' suggested. If resurrection in the true sense means the passing upwards at death into the new life, with the corresponding spiritual body, then assuredly the result is a moral personality and not a non-moral ghost. But Dr. Clarke's words here are only too true that 'The popular idea of heaven does not include the idea of genuine moral activity, with perpetual motive, volition, and responsibility; there is no thought of moral effort, but all is conceived as easy, sin being impossible, and virtue almost automatic. Moral strain has been endured once for all on earth, and heaven is a state in which the reward of successful endurance is enjoyed in endless release from pressure and responsibility.' [1] Yet, it cannot but be clear to every thoughtful mind that an automatic heaven is not only utterly unworthy but equally impossible. It is, indeed, a sheer contradiction in terms. Even in this life, is there

[1] *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 467.

any sphere in which the highest reward for noble endurance of strain, or heroic devotion to difficult service, consists in doing nothing ever after? Rather does not every soldier and every scholar alike, ask as the recompense for faithfulness in one high commission, that he may be entrusted with a higher, i.e. a harder? Why should heaven hereafter be more empty or inane than heaven here? When the New Testament receives its due in intelligent treatment, it neither leads us on to an everlasting nursery nor to an Eastern Nirvana.

In spite of the absence of such detailed knowledge as would only have gratified curiosity without adding to moral stimulus or spiritual attraction, we have quite enough assured to us, on the principles of Christ's kingdom, to warrant a hope that cannot truly be called less than glorious. The enjoyment of personal continuity is guaranteed. All sentient life clings to life to the uttermost, thereby testifying that it is a good and not an ill, whatever be the groans of pessimism. Humanity as a whole still echoes the old estimate, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.' All suicides are monstrosities, nor does any healthy mind contemplate annihilation without aversion. It is much, beyond expression, to know that to the self which lives, and loves, and strives, and hopes, death will not be an end but a new beginning. If death be but new-birth, its sting is drawn.

Again, if there be one personal continuity there will be many. This includes, of necessity, reunion with all loved ones gone before. And this in turn

means all that is most natural as well as supernatural. Personality may grow slowly, but it develops surely. Whence the Christian vision is of loved ones, not as they were when they passed from our embrace, but as they may be expected to be under the timeless influences of a real Paradise. For the significance of all the figures employed cannot be overlooked, nor their joint testimony mistaken, that 'blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' How blessed, is beyond our ken. But it is well within our view that the problems and burdens and vexations, the sufferings and sorrows and temptations which constituted earth's discipline, will be left behind for ever, even though there be higher lessons of faith and obedience to be learned.

Certainly not less than that, but immeasurably more, is connoted in the simple yet transcendental assurance that for the true saint to depart is to be '*with* Christ.' 'With' a loved one! Does the whole vocabulary of human speech give us a larger, deeper, sweeter word, to hold the realities of heaven even here? What does the little child want so much as to be 'with' mother? What the noble son, more than to be 'with' his father? What any heart that knows true love, more than to be 'with' the beloved one? Does poetry say too strongly—

> Their meetings made December June,
> Their every parting was to die.

Nay, all that is best and deepest in human nature, when love and reverence blend, finds expression here. It is, truly, the worthiest and noblest heaven in one word.

Such a Christian hope is redeemed from even the

appearance of sensuous pietism, by the knowledge that to be ' with Christ ' must mean the highest and holiest ideal, no less than the deepest and sweetest. Altruism to the uttermost, as at once the expression and the development of the loftiest egoism—nothing less than that can come from association with Him. ' And His servants shall do Him service.' All who know anything of the Christ of the Gospels, know what that must mean, although none can say in what spheres, or with what added powers, or to what vast extent, the new service will be rendered. It is enough that it will be His service; if worthy of Him, worthiest of ourselves. The quality being assured, its unknown quantity, its indefinable manner may be left as rather enhancing than diminishing our hope.

If, then, from a fair and full induction of His life and words and works, His death and resurrection, with the consequent influence of the Holy Spirit on all true disciples, we may believe this much, no more is needed to make all earth's tribulation welcome, as a noble opportunity of attaining hereafter to such a richer and larger development of ' the life that is life indeed.'

> And we shall sit at endless feast,
> Enjoying each the other's good;
> What vaster dream can hit the mood
> Of love on earth?

Such a prospect, multiplied by all the possibilities of God's universe in realities beyond our present powers to conceive, gives glorious permission to every Christian who is able to say with truth ' For me to live

is Christ,' to go on and meet the last enemy with unspeakable conviction that 'to die is gain.'

(5) As to Hell

That if there be a hereafter at all it must have its dark side no less than its bright, is too plain to require demonstration from theology. Moral philosophy alone would declare that there can be nothing in the hour and article of death to make good bad, or vice versa. It is the province of Christian theology, starting from the truth concerning Christ as sketched imperfectly though carefully above, to make as clear as possible what remains for the bad, no less than for the good, in accordance with the law 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap.' Such a principle constitutes a genuine Christian Karma, which needs neither reference to ancient Buddhism, nor reinforcement from modern theosophy.

But the very first step towards the true representation of Christian essentials in this respect, must be the final dismissal of the word 'hell' from modern theology. It is indeed high time that a term so repulsive, unnecessary, ambiguous, and misleading, was altogether dropped from the Christian vocabulary. The cognate popular terms 'endless punishment,' 'eternal punishment,' 'eternal torment,' &c., are also gravely misleading, and serve in the piercing light of to-day rather to drive men away from the gospel, than lead them to repentance by appeal to life's solemn issues. It were utterly vain to attempt to ignore the uncertainty, doubt, and denial, which honeycomb the old

presentation of the future destiny of the wicked. The modern attitude may be expressed with the bluntness of some latest theology,[1] or with the reverent caution of scholarly evangelicalism.[2] The fact remains, be the expression what it may, that a restatement of the doctrine which is really consonant with the gospel of Christ, in present-day terms, is not merely desirable but absolutely necessary, if Christianity is to maintain its hold, let alone win its way, in the twentieth century.[3]

It is an almost appalling task to attempt to summarize a theme upon which whole libraries have been written, yet one may in all modesty seek to present that which appears essential to Christianity, and leave fuller exposition to other occasions. Putting aside equally the assumptions that either the old or the new theology must, as such, be true, the time has come to point out that certain long-popular conceptions on this dread subject are not essential to true Christian belief,

[1] 'There is no need to labour the point; popular evangelical views of the punishment of sin are incredible, when looked at in a common-sense way. But they are even more chaotic on the subject of death, and whatever follows death' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 206). 'The conventional eschatology of the Churches is both incoherent and untrue' (*New Theology Sermons*, p. xi).

[2] As in Dr. Barrett's volume on *The Intermediate State*, or Dr. Banks' *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, or Dr. Beet's *Manual of Theology*, or Canon Maccoll's *Life Here and Hereafter*, with many other such productions.

[3] It would be difficult to name a better specimen of what is meant by such restatement than the concluding pages of Dr. W. N. Clarke's volume mentioned above. The reader is especially referred to the whole section on 'The Life Beyond,' pp. 466–80. The comfort of finding one's own conclusions, after years of earnest thought, endorsed in such a lucid fashion, is to the present writer great indeed.

but rather represent mistakes of the past, which can now no more be perpetuated than those who made them can justly be contemned. They did their best. We must do the same. In our clearer modern light, the following features of the case have to be unlearned and once for all dismissed.

1. Negative Principles

(i) There is no warrant at all for lurid assertions of physical suffering on the part of the unsaved. No language can sufficiently repudiate the ghastly horrors with which, in times past, the dark future has been travestied in the name of the gospel. That it should ever have been possible in connexion with Christianity to bid a child think what will be 'when the body has been lying on the same side on the scorching broiling fire for a hundred millions of years,' is enough to make all Christendom shudder for shame.[1]

(ii) There is to-day neither need nor right to speak of 'damnation.' There is no Greek word in the whole New Testament answering to our modern term 'damn.' There is no 'damned' man on earth, and there will never be any 'damned' man hereafter. To read publicly, in modern language, 'He that believeth

[1] Other specimens may be seen in Dr. C. H. H. Wright's volume on *The Intermediate State*, quoted from Romish authorities. Alas! they could be paralleled only too luridly from Protestant preachers and writers. Happily there are plenty of thoughtful protests to the contrary. Thus Dr. W. B. Pope (*Compendium*, iii. 420–21): 'No material emblems can describe the misery of the conscious eternal exclusion from the vision of God. To be without God in eternity is hell.' Or again, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, Dr. Banks, p. 203: 'Nothing is said in Scripture respecting the nature of future punishment. The worm and the fire are figures of speech.'

not shall be damned,' is a gross misrepresentation, and equally unpardonable, seeing that the Revised Version is authoritatively at hand.[1]

(iii) There never was, is, or will be, any right in the name of the gospel of Christ to speak of 'eternal torments.' No father on earth, deserving the name, would ever think of 'tormenting' his child for any grievous wrong that he might do. No figurative expression whatever, of any passage of Scripture, warrants our attributing to God a less real and tender fatherhood than our own.

(iv) There is no external infliction of vengeance of any kind. Punishment never signifies the mere exercise of arbitrary divine will-power, expressed in anger.[2] To-day's better understanding of the divine immanence shows how both 'the goodness and severity of God'

[1] Nor is there any warrant for the sweeping assertion of the latest theology that evangelical doctrine to-day generally involves 'belief in a physical resurrection and a distant judgement day, side by side with belief in the present bliss of the righteous and punishment of the *damned*' (*New Theology Sermons*, p. xii.). To say nothing of others, this last hideous term has never once been used by the present writer in a ministry of more than thirty years. One regrets to find that in this later volume, even as in the preceding, the writer lets his outspokenness degenerate into wholesale innuendoes which are scarcely less than insolent. What if, in a period of widening and deepening thought, there has ensued a 'remarkable silence of the pulpit in regard to everlasting punishment,' &c., is there no truer or worthier estimate of it than to say, 'Is it not about time that all this fumbling ceased, and preachers showed themselves able to give a reason for the faith that is in them?' Such a question almost inevitably calls to mind Job xii. 2. Assuredly there is as much 'reason' in Dr. W. N. Clarke's volume, not to mention hosts of others, as in anything emanating from any new theology whatever.

[2] 'We require no arbitrary will or decree of God to explain this. Men make their own character, and character makes destiny' (*Manual of Christian Doctrine*, Dr. Banks, p. 273, second edition).

There can be little doubt that a great deal, indeed by far the larger

work ever in men, not on them. Whence it follows that every moral being decides for himself which of these shall rule his destiny.

(v) There is no warrant whatever for suggesting

part, of the popular misconception and misrepresentation of Christian doctrine in this respect, is due to the language of the Version of 1611, in its perpetual confusion between the simple future expressed by the word 'will,' and the imperative conveyed by 'shall.' It is easy to refer to that Version as 'a well of English undefiled,' and no one doubts that it is a wonderful embodiment of what Mr. Hall Caine calls 'the grand style.' But for all that, so far as truth is of any importance in the minds of the common people, it has been and yet is, in this as in some other respects, mischievously misleading to a lamentable degree. Examples might only too easily be multiplied. (See *Which Bible to Read*, by the present writer, where very many are given.) A few must here suffice as pointers to the rest.

Psalm ix. 17 is still read in public throughout the Anglican Church, and elsewhere, thus: 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.' From which the ordinary mind cannot possibly infer anything else than a threat of divine vengeance in the form of future punishment, after the fashion in which some earthly king would deal with conquered foes. I have seen this passage in large print posted freely on walls by way of inducing people to come to Christian Mission services! Whereas in truth, there is neither any 'hell' here mentioned at all, nor is there any threat. The R.V. happily corrects the former error, but it leaves the latter unaltered. There is, however, no warrant for anything more than the simple, natural future, expressed in 'will return,' &c.—which is as much better suited to the context as it is a truer representation of the divine attitude.

So, again, when the general statement is made (Ps. xxxii. 10), that 'Many sorrows shall be to the wicked'—the impression conveyed is that of a threat, rather than a warning. Yet the latter is not only the truth, in all such instances, but points ever to the working of moral law, as distinct from any personal or arbitrary infliction of suffering on the divine part.

In the New Testament the same misleading confusion is continually repeated. The following are but specimens of more:

Matt. xiii. 42, 50: 'There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

that all the heathen are on the road to perdition, or will be 'eternally lost' unless missionaries are sent to them. Paul's letter to the Romans[1] ought long ago to have made this clear for ever.

(vi) There is no warrant whatever for assuming that the vast majority of the human race will be lost.[2] Even so stern a pleader for 'orthodoxy' as the late Dr. Randles expressly says: 'We see no great extravagance in the opinion of those who compute that the proportion of the finally lost to the saved will be about as the proportion of the criminal part of England's population to all the rest.'[3]

Matt. xxv. 46: 'These shall go away into eternal punishment.'
Luke x. 12: 'It shall be more tolerable for Sodom,' &c.
John viii. 14: 'Ye shall die in your sins.'
John xii. 49: 'The word that I spake, the same shall judge him.'
Gal. vi. 7, 8: 'Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.'
2 Thess. i. 9: 'Who shall suffer punishment,' &c.

Every one of these cases is misleading, in conveying more or less of a threat, with the inevitable suggestion of divine vengeance, for which there is no shadow of justification. Let the reader compare those passages, and many other such, even in the R.V., with their presentation in Dr. Weymouth's New Testament; and he will see how the only rendering which is accurate, in the speech of to-day, is at the same time as instructive as helpful. The simple future points to the consequences of moral evil as being never a matter of divine passion or arbitrariness, but always of that holy naturalness which in its very inevitableness points rather to divine sympathy and sorrow. These are best expressed in Christ's own words, 'Ye will not come to Me that ye may have life,' and in His tearful lament over Jerusalem.

At the present hour, whatever becomes of archaic style and old association, the overwhelming need—especially for public reading—is that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, should be conveyed by the language employed.

[1] Chap. ii. See also John x. 16; Luke xiii. 29, &c.

[2] See Banks, *Manual*, p. 302 (tenth ed.); *The Intermediate State*, by Dr. Barrett, chap. vii. &c.

[3] *After Death*, p. 245.

(vii) There is no short and easy way of settling this great question, with all its corollaries of mystery, either by appeal to proof texts,[1] or by sweeping *a priori* axioms.[2] It is rather a case for perpetual learning and unlearning, patiently gathering light from all quarters, and seeking for the guidance of the Spirit of Truth whose it is to 'take of the things of Christ and show them' unto men.

(viii) The doctrine known as 'conditional immortality,' which is practically the same as that of annihilation, appears to satisfy some minds. But the confusion which it involves between moral character and personal existence, as also between a spiritual and an ontological change in conversion, are so manifest and unavoidable, together with its low estimate of human nature and many other difficulties, that it cannot be taken seriously as a true representation of

[1] Thus in the lecture on *Future Rewards and Punishments* in the series of Manchester Lectures on *What is Christianity?* (vol. i., p. 252), the lecturer says: 'I shall appeal to Christ alone upon the question, If a person die in mortal sin, will he become the conscious subject of eternal woe?' And yet Christ Himself said that His teaching was incomplete, and needed the further interpretation of the Spirit who would 'guide His disciples into all the truth.' Why should the apostles and the innumerable disciples since who have been 'all taught of God' (cf. John vi. 45) be excluded from bearing witness on so vast and intricate a theme?

[2] Such as this: 'These theories do not meet the case at all. While sin remains in the universe, God is defeated; everlasting punishment involves His everlasting failure' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 208). This is only an assumption that the theory of universalism does meet the case. But it is quite as really open to criticism as the other theories which are held up to scorn. It is not only possible, but absolutely necessary on purely philosophical grounds, to deny that everlasting punishment, rightly understood, involves everlasting divine failure.

Christian doctrine. Dr. Clarke is well warranted in saying that 'In spite of questions that must arise, belief in the permanent continuance of all human beings is the belief that seems certain to hold the ground.'[1] Whatever stress may be laid upon picked passages of Scripture, a full and fair induction from the whole Bible leads, we must here be content to affirm,[2] to no other conclusion.

(ix) Yet even Conditionalism is more thinkable than Universalism. The latter theory is, indeed, purely emotional, and cannot be expressed without involving either a false illustration or a contradiction in terms.[3] There is no need, therefore, to dwell upon it. Both Conditionalism and Universalism must ever fail to express the truth, because the conclusions are based upon false premisses. They do not start with man as he is, a moral and immortal being, but with a

[1] *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 402. See also *Haeckel's Monism False*, by the present writer, ch. vi.

[2] For a comprehensive summary of these doctrines, and fair estimate of the modern propaganda so vigorously maintained by some thoughtful writers on their behalf, see *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, by the late Dr. S. D. F. Salmond (4 ed.), Book 6, ch. ii.

[3] Take the latest and most confident statement. 'It does not seem to occur to theologians that the Christian fundamental of the love of God renders the dogma of everlasting punishment impossible, for it implies that God will do the most for the being that needs the most, and surely that will, must be, the most unhappy sinner.' 'No, this kind of incoherent theologizing will not do' (*The New Theology*, R. J. Campbell, p. 207). It is strange, as I have pointed out elsewhere (*New Theology, its Meaning and Value*, p. 113, published by Culley, London), that so thoughtful a writer does not see that the incoherence is his own. For certainly there is no logical warrant whatever for inferring universalism from the fact that 'God will do the most' for the most unhappy sinner.

Again: 'If a man has been living for self, he has been making a

creature non-moral enough to be coerced as to conduct, and possessed only of the same physical and spiritual nature as the dog or the horse. Against which, not only Christian faith, and the whole Bible, but all the highest and noblest instincts of humanity, utterly protest.

2. Positive Principles

Seeing, however, that mere negatives can never suffice on a theme of such everwhelming importance, the following items are here presented, with all reverence and modesty, as the essentials of Christian faith to-day.

(i) When this life is over, real judgement awaits

mistake and preparing for himself a harvest of pain, for sooner or later the divine life within him, the truer, deeper self, will assert itself against the divisive efforts of sin' (p. 214). But this prophetic word 'will' is pure assertion, and nothing more. How confused is the psychology and moral philosophy, to say nothing of the theology, enveloping it, may be gauged from the next sentence: 'It is just as impossible for a man to go on eternally living apart from the universal life, as it is for a sand-castle to shut out the ocean; the returning tide will break down the puny barriers, and destroy everything that tends to separate between the soul and God. For, after all, what is our life but God's?' (p. 214). Here is another 'will,' but based on what? On the assumption of an exact moral similitude between a man and a sand-castle! In which case either the man ceases to be man, or the sand-heap becomes a moral being. The concluding question, however well intended, is little short of blasphemy. For it makes God responsible for the moral evil of all humanity! Nor is that all. Reverently but really it must be pointed out that it involves nothing less than the wickedness of God. For if at any future era it be possible for God to make a bad man good, then assuredly He ought, on all grounds, to have done so for all men ages ago. The love of God that *would* not prevent evil when it *could*, is sheer self-contradiction, and merely suggests selfishness on an infinite scale.

every man, based upon the twin facts of his moral free agency and his life's opportunities of exercising it. No better expression of this can ever be found than in the apostolic summary—'We must all be made manifest before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether good or bad.' [1]

(ii) Into this judgement will come the fairest and fullest consideration of all terrestrial differences in heredity and environment; on the plain principle of justice that 'unto whomsoever much is given, of him will be much required.' That covers the whole human case. It is as easy for omniscient love to render to every man according to his best, as it is for the divine immanence now working in physiology to furnish every man with an idiosyncrasy of nature.

(iii) The only and final Judge will be Christ Himself. Not as a spectacular Pronouncer of arbitrary personal feeling, but as the infallible Discerner and Declarer [2] of all degrees of likeness, or unlikeness, to that divine holiness which was manifested for human appreciation in His own character. In His decision blended tenderness and severity will ever work together, and the issue will be truth in love to the very uttermost.[3]

(iv) Whatever there be of condemnation, it will all be self-created, self-inflicted. All doom is but the natural and necessary consequence of character. All character results from habits; and these, in turn,

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10. [2] Matt. vii. 24.

[3] Reverent thought will of course recognize in His judgement the absolute accord of the whole Deity, without asking for 'personal' distinctions utterly beyond human analysis. It is scarcely necessary to quote Christ's own recorded utterances hereupon, especially from

only arise from acts which have embodied the genuine decisions of a moral being.[1]

(v) The essence of sin, as here considered, is wilful and therefore positive rejection of the highest known, through deliberate preference for the lower. How much men differ in tendencies towards either, proceeding from heredity and environment, God only knows. But the degree of resulting guiltiness is in each case safe in His hand—i.e. in the natural working out of the righteous consequences of wrong-doing, when there is neither repentance nor desire for betterness.[2]

(vi) All representations of the actual suffering involved in self-inflicted punishment, are figurative not literal, spiritual not physical. This does not point to any lessening of reality, but to the truth that, whether it be greater or less, it arises from the internal action of the self, and not the external imposition of God

the Fourth Gospel (cf. John v. 22, 27 ; xvi. 8 ; Heb. x. 29, &c.). But it is relevant to ask, in view of modern criticism, whence such could have come save from Himself, as the transcendent character represented ? Could an Alexandrian Jew or a converted Greek have put such sentences into the lips of an imaginary Rabbi, or a non-existent philosopher ? That would, indeed, have involved a stupendous psychological miracle. None but the real Jesus could possibly have suggested the recorded Jesus.

[1] 'Only that retribution comes which must come ; and all the retribution that must come comes. The doctrine of an inevitably sufficient and absolutely righteous retribution upon all unforsaken sin has all the moral power that any doctrine of retribution can possess. In this world, and in all worlds, such retribution is perfectly certain, as sure as the being of God' (Dr. W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 476).

[2] 'How souls that differ so variously in degree of good and evil are grouped with reference to association amongst themselves, we do not know ; but whatever may be the groupings and associations that the righteous judgement of God appoints, the great twofold division of destiny according to character is certain' (ibid., p. 473).

as being 'angry' in the sense of human caprice or passion.

(vii) On the other side of the grave, each man will find himself, as to character, where he was on this side. Forgiven or unforgiven, pure or impure, fondest of good or ill, drawn to or revolting from all the divinest known to him here. On these moral qualities death can have no effect whatever. It is not even an actual new beginning. Death is but an important crisis in the eternity which is as real now as it will ever be.

(viii) Every human spirit entering upon the great hereafter self-hindered from the blessedness whose essence is the love of the highest, and so far self-doomed to the love of the lowest, is and will be a cause of divine sorrow. However far beyond our comprehension the divine nature may be, our humanity is sufficiently analogous to warrant the faith that in Him, as in us, love cannot but become sorrow when rejected. There never has been, is, or will be, any 'anger' of God which is not essentially wounded love. The very sanctity of inviolable moral law lies in the truth that it is the only way in which the divine desire and design, viz. the greatest blessedness for the greatest number, can be secured or maintained. Doom hereafter is the self-caused sequence of sin here. In the degree in which such human doom accumulates, the sorrow of God deepens.

(ix) The real terror, and if realized the unspeakable horror, of the far future, is the helplessness of God. Omnipotence has here no application, seeing that not even omnipotence can do, or can be expected to do, the impossible. Future blessedness must mean future

goodness, and goodness is but the love of the highest. But love, to be love, must be spontaneous. Coerced love is as unthinkable as a round square. The utmost that can ever be done towards compelling love, is to appeal to a nature capable of it. The appeal is often in vain. It is quite possible that it may be so in perpetuity. For even Jesus Himself wept over Jerusalem with the confession of His own helplessness to save those who would not come to Him. To such an attitude fully applies His own avowal, 'He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.'

(x) Yet, as above noted, it is certain that if the individual man survives the fact of death, there must be the continuity of personality. But all personality, as such, involves moral capacity. And this, again, necessarily involves capacity both to sin and to repent. There is nothing in death to destroy this capacity. It is well said that 'The popular conception of the future life urgently needs improvement in this respect, for it is not a consistent and intelligent idea of personal continuance.' [1]

(xi) Thus the far, far future really rests, not with God, but with human character. 'The question is not whether God will always forgive, but whether man can always repent. God's forgiveness is ever sure; man's

[1] Dr. W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 467. These other words also merit reiteration: 'When we say that the life to come is as truly moral and responsible as the present life, we are only unfolding the definition of immortality. If men are to be still men, they must be real moral agents. Take away motive, volition, and responsibility, and man sinks to the grade of a thing. A life of mere retribution without present responsibility would not be a human life; a deathless existence without responsible action, would not be an immortality of man.'

repentance is never sure.[1] Every act of sin weakens the will and lessens its power of resistance ; and if the acts become habits, and the habits mould the character, the will may become completely paralysed and repentance become impossible.'[2] Assuredly there is nothing in human death to alter the character of God. If He be loving now, He will be loving for ever. If He will welcome any penitent now, He will welcome every penitent for ever and ever. But if a man be not penitent here, what is to lead him to become such hereafter ? Added knowledge, influences, and opportunities ? Maybe. May not be. Of these we know nothing. That is the risk which, just in proportion as influences and opportunities have abounded here, becomes the dreadful menace of the unknown.

(xii) So far as we are here and now able to judge, it does seem fearfully true that character may become permanent. It is almost too horrible to suggest, yet it does seem that even before our eyes, some human characters have come to the stage of saying 'Evil, be thou my good.' We are not their judges ; but the tragedy of such an object-lesson is luridly plain. However far the prodigal may wander, every step has to be retraced before the waiting father's kiss can be received. But what is to turn his steps homeward,

[1] Here Prof. J. Ward's words find application again : 'Such a view, it may be said, is incompatible with the scientific conception of law, for that postulates necessity, whereas this lets contingency into the very heart of things. It is true ; I not only admit it, but contend that any other world would be meaningless. For the contingency is not that of chance but that of freedom' (*Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii., 280).

[2] *Life Here and Hereafter*, Canon Maccoll, p. 131.

instead of farther away? What if he had come to *prefer* the pigs and harlots to his father's home and love? That is the dire contingency to be faced, which no universalism in theology can resolve into certainty without contradicting both the divine and human nature. Certainly death does not fix destiny for any moral being who survives it.[1] A physical event cannot by any possibility determine a moral conclusion.

The final question, therefore, must be whether sin can continue after death. And the answer must ever be another question—Does man continue?[2] If man endures, as distinct alike from ghost or thing, then the possibility of sin at least must continue. Discussions as to the precise meaning of *ἀιώνιος* are here irrelevant. Enough to mark that it points us on to the unmeasured future, without setting before us the absolutely impossible task of apprehending what

[1] 'It should also be noted that the doctrine of the irrevocableness of ruin when reached by fixity of character, is a different doctrine from that of the irrevocableness of destiny from the moment of death. No one can doubt that if character becomes unalterable, destiny becomes unalterable with it—unless annihilation should intervene. But from this it would not follow that at death unalterableness of character is reached' (Dr. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 475). The practice which used to obtain of quoting Eccles. xi. 3, 'Where the tree falleth there shall it lie,' as the Christian doctrine concerning human destiny at death, merely illustrates the fallacy of former theories of inspiration and habits of exegesis.

[2] The late Dean Farrar suffered much as a Universalist. How far he was from such a conclusion is witnessed in his own words: 'Nay, I do not say that some men may not for ever suffer from the consequences of their sins, and from impenitence respecting them, dearly as I wish it were possible for us to believe in final universal felicity as a glorious triumph of the love of God and the Cross of Christ. Hell and spiritual death are endless conditions so long as there is persistent impenitence. They cease when the soul repents, but not till then' (*Mercy and Judgement*, p. 482).

'everlasting' literally means. 'Eternal life' and 'eternal death' in Christian usage are always, as Jesus Himself and the beloved disciple kategorically insist, qualitative not quantitative terms.[1] Certainly the latter necessarily follows upon the former. But the 'eternal death' to which the gospel of Christ points with trembling awe, is a matter of character, not duration. The character, and the character only, determines the duration. What then determines the character?

That is *the final and unanswerable question*, the real terror of which, when apprehended, contains more to impress, and move to repentance, the enlarging mind of man, than all the reckless and lurid though well-intended misrepresentations of mediaeval theology. It is at once most hopeful and most dreadful, because most true.[2] 'To put it briefly, then, we may say that no one will be finally lost whom Almighty love can save. If the door of hope be closed, it is by the sinner himself. So much we may safely say, and we have no warrant to say more.'[3] We have no need for more. It may well be, as Dean Farrar remarked, that 'on the subject of man's future it has been God's will to leave us uninstructed in details, and that He has vouchsafed to us only so much light as may serve to guide our lives.'[4]

That really is all the light we have any right to

[1] See John xvii. 2; 1 John v. 20, &c.

[2] 'The most serious dangers in connexion with thought upon future destiny do not spring from belief in the largeness of the divine grace. They spring from the idea that salvation is something else than transformation into the likeness of the good God' (Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 480).

[3] *Life Here and Hereafter*, Canon Maccoll, p. 130.

[4] *Mercy and Judgement*, p. 483.

expect, or any need to find. The notion that in order to justify faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind, it is necessary that all the counsels of God should be made perfectly clear and acceptable to puny men, is little better than imbecility. Nor is it any more true that the Christian doctrine of future retribution tends either to fanaticism or to madness. Unless the universe is to be given over to moral chaos, the distinction between good and evil must be maintained to the uttermost, both here and hereafter. As the love of God expressed in Jesus Christ is the highest revelation of good, so is its wilful rejection the extreme of evil. But if creatures are to be capable of appreciating love, they must also be capable of rejecting it.

That the creation of such beings is ' a divine experiment,' with the risk of failure, must be acknowledged. We have no faculties whereby to judge how far such a transcendent experiment was justifiable. Thought and speech together fail in any endeavour to deal with such a theme. Two things, however, we may in all humility be said to know.

First, that if the love of God be love at all, He could never have been content to bring into existence creatures to whom the power to love in return was denied, lest they should also be capable of sin. Love can never look for less than love. But sinless automata could never love.

Secondly, that even now, we do already see the mystery of good, moral no less than physical, so really overcoming and exceeding the mystery of evil, that we may well wait, whilst working on in the patience of hope, for the dispersal of such clouds of darkness as at present vex our minds and burden our hearts.

There is, therefore, in this whole solemn doctrine of destiny, nothing to make men mad with revolt, but everything to lead them to sober and holy daily decision for the highest. The outlook is not such as should goad to mere spasmodic vehemence of zeal, or fanatic outbursts of pietism. Rather does the vision contain everything to stimulate and develop a Christian faith which should blend love, reverence, and unselfishness, with patient pity and costly devotion. For thus only will the Kingdom which is 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit,' ever come, here or hereafter. Now, certainly, as Mr. John Stuart Mill impressively declared, in his closing words on Theism,[1] God needs our help, even that of 'the humblest human creature.' It may well be so on a larger scale beyond the veil. The eternal and everlasting certainty is that men are not waiting, and will never have to wait, for the love of God. The love of God is always and for ever waiting for men. This is the very core of the Christian revelation, the true measure of human responsibility, the abiding essence of the good tidings of Jesus Christ.

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[1] 'In making this religious devotion to the welfare of our fellow creatures the rule of our life, we may be co-operating with the unseen Being to whom we owe all that is enjoyable in life. One elevated feeling this form of religious idea admits of, the feeling of helping God—as a battle is constantly going on in which the humblest human creature is not incapable of taking some part' (*Theism*, cheap edition, p. 108). The suggestion that we should thus be 'requiting the good He has given by a voluntary co-operation which He, not being omnipotent, really needs, and by which a somewhat nearer approach may be made to the fulfilment of His purposes,' is quite in accord with Christian philosophy. If the 'voluntary' be possible, omnipotence is irrelevant.

ADDENDUM

By way of showing how little weight is in the assertion that 'modern Christian thought is giving up' the 'physical' view of the Resurrection of Christ, the following lists of writers are suggestive without pretending to be exhaustive. Advocating the purely spirit-resurrection, as explained in Chapter V., we find

Prof. Harnack
Dr. J. Warschauer in *The New Evangel.*
Rev. Rhondda Williams „ *The New Theology.*
Dr. H. Rashdall „ *Doctrine and Development.*
Dr. K. C. Anderson „ *The New Theology.*
Rev. C. E. Beeby „ *Doctrine and Principles.*
Dr. E. A. Abbott „ *The Kernel and the Husk.*
Prof. Schmiedel „ *Encyclop. Biblica.*
Dr. Warschauer and H. C. Wallace in *Credo.*
Rev. Kirsopp Lake in *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,* with others of the 'advanced' school.

Accepting the objective actuality of a spiritual body—which is generally, though incorrectly, termed the 'physical' Resurrection,

Rev. R. J. Campbell in *The New Theology.*
Dr. Westcott „ *Gospel of the Resurrection.*
Dr. Sanday „ *Outlines of the Life of Christ.*
Dr. Fairbairn, author of *Christ in Modern Theology, The Philosophy of the Christian Religion,* &c.

Dr. A. B. Bruce	in *Apologetics, or Christianity Defensively Stated.*
Dr. W. N. Clarke	„ *Outline of Christian Theology.*
Dr. Bernard in Article	„ *Hastings' Bible Dictionary.*
Dr. Peake, Dean of Faculty of Theology in Owens College, Manchester.	See article in *Sunday Strand,* Nov. 1907.
Dr. W. Milligan	in *The Resurrection of Christ.*
Dr. J. S. Banks	„ *Manual of Christian Doctrine.*
Dr. J. A. Beet	„ *Manual of Theology.*
Dr. Kennedy	„ *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.*
Rev. Griffith Jones	„ *The Ascent through Christ.*
Rev. R. W. Seaver	„ *To Christ through Criticism.*
Rev. Sparrow Simpson	„ *Our Lord's Resurrection.*
Dr. C. A. Briggs	„ *New Light on the Life of Jesus.*
Dr. Randolph	„ *The Empty Tomb.*
Major Turton	„ *The Truth of Christianity.*
Rev. T. A. Lacey	„ *The Historic Christ,*

and many others.

An elaborate note on the bibliography of the subject, by Prof. Schmiedel and Dr. James Moffatt, will be found at the end of the article on 'Resurrection and Ascension Narratives' in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica.* Mr. Lake also adds a list of authors, on p. 284 of his work, including many Continental writers. These latter are for the most part 'advanced.'

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